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RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS.

To the Editor of the Christian Observer.

THE following letter from a father to his son, on the important subject of *worldly conformity*, appears to be so well adapted to promote the design of your miscellany, that I submit it to your consideration, in the confidence of its early insertion. S.

My dear R—,

I told you I meditated a letter of some importance. Your years of education are over—you have entered into life as your own master—and it is now my intention to bring under your view the considerations which bear upon the choice of such a plan and course of action on setting out in life, as may be most conducive to your own welfare, and that of your connections, both here and hereafter. Mistakes in this point are not only attended by present danger, but are productive of future difficulties, and threaten wide-spreading mischief.

First, then, the great object—that object compared with which all others so shrink into insignificance, that in Scripture it is emphatically called “the one thing needful”—is to be a Christian, and to lead a life befitting a Christian. The latter of these duties was contemplated by the Apostle, in his call on all who bore the Christian name to consider what manner of persons they ought to be in all holy conversation (meaning, by that term, our conduct in social life,) and godliness. The two obligations are most intimately connected. The former is the natural fruit

Christ. Observ. No. 185.

of the latter; and the latter cannot be maintained without the former. But there are degrees in most things; and both points, therefore, may be often substantially attained where there is a mixture of much imperfection. To sit down, however, satisfied with imperfection is incompatible with the very essence of Christianity; which requires us constantly to aim at the highest standard, and to make it our unremitting endeavour to be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. If we thus act with the devout spirit, humility, earnestness, simplicity, and sincerity of true followers of our blessed Saviour, he will mercifully pardon our defects, and lead us on towards higher attainments; neither of which have we any scriptural right to expect while our aim and desire are bounded by any thing short of Christian perfection.

You will, I fear, think this exordium long, but I must make it still longer: for, in order to see what “conversation” becomes a Christian, we must call to mind what is his “calling;”—how exalted, how far removed from the low and mean standard of those who are Christians in name only, or who, if Christians indeed, are of so equivocal a character, that at best they build only with hay, straw, stubble; and if saved at all, must be saved “so as by fire.” A Christian is called “out of the world” to have fellowship with God; while the world, notwithstanding all specious appearances, is represented

as under the power of Satan. The change thus wrought in him is described as a change "from darkness to light;" and the strongest images are every where used in Scripture to set forth *his* happiness, and the misery and criminality of those who have not, like him, escaped from the snares and the pollutions which abound among the great body of mankind. *He* is spoken of as "an heir of heaven," and as sitting even now "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." *They*, on the contrary, are represented as under the Divine wrath; and, while living "according to the course of this world," are said to live under the immediate influence of "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2.)

We cannot, then, be surprised that a just and holy God should make so wide a difference between these two classes, when we reflect that, however they may often agree in inferior points, yet in their leading and paramount principles, and in the great features of their character, they are directly opposed to each other. They are opposed in no less a degree than as his servants and his enemies. This view of things is strikingly exhibited in Mr. Wilberforce's work on vital Christianity—a work which is more familiar to you than to me, and for which I know your just partiality. One passage to which I particularly allude, is that respecting "good hearted young men," and "innocent young women."

The very great difference between the two classes which I have mentioned is not the only thing to be noticed; but also the great danger lest that class which has escaped from the general wickedness and peril should be drawn again into the vortex by its intercourse with the other. The temptations presented by the world are described in Scripture as most alluring; and our own hearts as most prone to yield to them;

while the devil and his angels are represented as full of wiles, and as exerting them all to give to those temptations the victory over us.

Let us consider these points more distinctly.

The world is engaged, as far at least as common prudence will permit, in indulging the propensities and appetites natural to man; and its familiar maxims, and expressions of taste and feeling, bear the stamp of this its course. Now, the great effort of Christians is to emancipate themselves from the dominion of those appetites and propensities; to "keep the body under, and bring it into subjection;" and "to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." Surely, therefore, such persons should avoid those who pursue the opposite course, as far, at least, as is consistent with the business and the charities of life. If they do not, they will almost infallibly wander from God; all that is good in them will fade: and instead of "abhorring that which is evil, and cleaving to that which is good"—instead of delighting in spirituality of character and holiness of conversation—instead of dreading and shunning the reverse, and feeling a dissatisfying void wherever, though decorum is sustained, these holy and heavenly qualities are wanting—they will find the distinction between good and evil less and less strongly marked in their affections, and, through the influence of their affections, by degrees, less strongly marked in their judgments; till both affection and judgment, but especially the former, will be in imminent danger of passing over from God's side to the side of the enemy. Then will creep upon them the degeneracy of the church of Ephesus, in leaving its "first love;" of Laodicea, in being "lukewarm;" and finally of Sardis, whose Christian attainments were all "ready to die," and which had a name that it lived while it was

dead. Thus, instead of being rendered, by the powerful influence of Christian society and example operating in aid of the other means of grace, "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," there is reason to fear that, by too free communication with the world, and by an attendant and consequent love of the world, they may find in the fearful day of account that they have been gradually prepared for the society and inheritance of the wicked.

You will perceive that I do not present you with this picture, in order to convince you that we ought not to commit ourselves to the full stream of the world, in its society, its habits, and amusements. You, my dear R., are yourself perfectly ready to say in *that* sense, "Be not conformed to this world." My object is rather to impress on your mind how *little* we should join in its course; how *far* we should stand aloof from it. The question is, doubtless, one of degree; but it nevertheless may be a question of the highest importance: for in many cases, of which this is one, all depends upon degree. With men of the world we must of course join in business: we also owe to them all courtesy and kindness: we must, therefore, have with them some measure of social intercourse. These circumstances, aided by the propensity of our own natures, and the artifices of Satan, will infallibly draw us on to too large a measure of it, if we are not very strictly on our guard. We shall be in great danger of improper compliances, and in still greater of losing a portion of the genuine Christian spirit, and of gradually imbibing a spirit opposed to it. And then what must follow? Do we hope that in such case we shall advance in the divine life? Do we even hope that we can maintain the ground already acquired? How can we expect to advance up the arduous ascent, when we are setting our faces

the other way, by undue intercourse with those who are either in the vale below or are descending towards it? And yet to stand still in the divine life is impossible. Unless we advance, we must go back. Some fair appearances may still be kept up, and our indulgent friends may still retain their hopes: but all is likely soon to become hollow and unsound, and we shall be apt to lose the very life and soul of true religion. I will not dilate farther on any of these topics: but they seem to me to furnish irresistible arguments for fighting manfully against the seductions of the world; for prescribing to ourselves a course of conduct, so opposed to *its* course, as with God's help to preserve us from those seductions; and for maintaining in all our intercourse with society a holy jealousy of worldly influence, and a holy distrust of ourselves.

The circumstance which most tends to lull well-disposed persons into practical forgetfulness of these truths, or at least into a very inadequate attention to them, is the agreement of religious and of decent worldly characters in so many inferior points, that the vast difference between them in essentials may not at first strike the view. Both are obliging, attentive to truth and honesty, and to their domestic, social, and public duties: both abstain from gross vice, and acknowledge the obligations of morality. But on a close inspection, it will appear that the one class serve God, mainly, sincerely, and unreservedly, and make his will their practical standard of duty; and that the other act on different principles—such as those of honour, worldly estimation, deference to the opinions and example of relations—to all which, religion, even if it have any sensible influence, is made subordinate. And although the religious man will be found very far superior to the worldly class, in resisting temptations to deviate from the right

course, as well as in the serenity and elevation of his soul under trials; yet the best of the latter class exhibit so much that is amiable in conduct, especially when we endeavour, as we ought, to view them with candour, that we shall be in the greatest danger, if we be not on our guard, of losing sight of the immense distance between them and the true Christian. And yet, let it never be forgotten, in the sight of God the one class *lives*, and the other *is dead* while it appears to live: and we shall die too, if we become conformed to it.

Our temptation to overlook this mighty interval between these two classes is often much increased by the defects and imperfections, in many points, of the true Christians we associate with, when compared with the worldly characters to whom we have access. The comparatively small number of the former frequently affords us very little room for selection; while, among the latter, we have a very extensive choice, and may suit our taste by fixing on those who are possessed of qualities which we naturally admire. And while we thus gratify ourselves by selecting pleasing associates, we shall be very apt to give them credit for much more of good, and much less of evil, than they really possess; and consequently to multiply and magnify to our imaginations the defects of our less fascinating religious acquaintance.

Then hope comes in to assist the delusion. We cannot think that persons so pleasing will not improve, and in the end, perhaps in a short time, add true religion to their other attainments. We even flatter ourselves that this most desirable event will be promoted by our own attentions; and in this way almost persuade ourselves that it is our duty to give them a large share of our society, and perhaps of our friendship; nay, possibly, we smooth, by our acquiescence, their unhallowed path, and connive at their faultiness, the better to win them over to religion

The result of such a course, or of any course analogous to it, is far more likely to be prejudicial to the Christian than beneficial to the other party. The firmness of Christian principle is weakened, its elevation is sunk, its purity soiled, its brightness dimmed, and its influence in the soul lessened, perhaps lost, before the unhappy adventurer—who is thus trying (for, however shocking, so it is!) what fellowship there can be betwixt Christ and Belial—is aware of his situation. Associations formed on such principles will admit of a variety of shades and gradations in describing their progress; but the practical result, I fear, is likely to be, for the most part, of the same dark complexion.

After all, when we have a propensity to indulge in worldly society, does not the evil lie deeper than in an error of judgment, as to what is the best Christian course? May it not be traced to the absence of a sound Christian taste; to the want of a due approval of “the things which are excellent?” If we are in any adequate measure sensible not only of the value, but of the beauty of holiness; if we enter deeply into the loveliness of the character of our blessed Redeemer; if we are in a disposition to have listened, like the converts at Corinth, with interest and delight to the discourses of the humble Paul, rather than to the polished harangues of the philosophers, and to have taken the Tent-maker and his friends for our companions, instead of those admired sages; then surely we shall not suffer refined manners, mental ability, talents for conversation, and other similar endowments, to outweigh in our esteem and affections those qualities of our religious friends which have the praise, not of man, but of God, and possess an intrinsic loveliness, as well as a sterling excellence, far outweighing all that the world can boast. To be alive to this loveliness, and to respond

to it in the tenor of our affections, was made by our Saviour a distinguishing mark of his disciples.— (John xiii. 34, 35 ; xv. 12, 17 ; 1 John iii. 14.) And corresponding habits of intercourse and union are insisted upon very frequently in the New Testament. (John xvii. 20. 23 ; Acts iv. 32, &c.) Lucian, at a later period, bears testimony to this character in true believers : “ See how these Christians love one another.” If, then, we discover in ourselves a want of this characteristic, nay, if even we discover (and this discovery we may all make in a considerable degree) that it falls short of the life and energy with which it shone forth in the first disciples of Christ ; let us be earnest in our prayers and diligent in our endeavours to attain it, and to cherish in ourselves so important an evidence of our religious character.

I have stated, that a wish to win others to religion is sometimes urged as a motive for improper compliances with the world. This motive is in itself so amiable and excellent ; it is so often brought forward as an extenuation by those who err in this particular respect ; and is so much held out by the world itself as an inducement for religious persons to relax in strictness, and to join, more than is consistent, in worldly society and amusements, that it requires a particular and distinct consideration.

Christians ought to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. His doctrine, like himself, is “ altogether lovely ;” and grievously deficient must that disciple be in the spirit of his Lord, if not also in his views of Christian duty, who disfigures the Gospel by gloomy austerity, or by a want of cordial kindness and courtesy towards those from whom, by the unmerited grace of God, he has been made to differ. But as an Englishman must never forget, when surrounded by foreigners with whose nation his own is at war, that he is an Englishman ; as a good subject must never forget his

principles and character when thrown among those who are adverse to the constitution of his country ; and as, in both these cases, kindness and courtesy must be accompanied by much caution and prudent reserve, and by a studied care not to join in any thing wrong, not to omit any duty to his country, not even to subject himself to the suspicion of so doing ; so likewise must the Christian conduct himself in the midst of the world. He professes to be a stranger and sojourner in it ; he professes to stand aloof from its principles, its habits, its spirit ; he has renounced the usurper that rules in it, “ the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Surely then he must dread its influence, and shun all approaches to familiarity with it : and while he endeavours to “ abound in love and in good works” towards all men, he must not fail to guard against lowering the pure and elevated standard of true religion in their eyes ; against injury to his own principles and spirit, or even the subjecting them to suspicion ; and also against giving any countenance to principles and a spirit opposed to those which he is bound by every tie of Christian allegiance, and Christian gratitude, to cultivate. Even therefore if he *could* make the Gospel of his Saviour amiable in the eyes of others, at the expense of any of these objects, he would be bound not to attempt to do so. By detracting from its character, and from his own, he might possibly render it more palatable to those who cannot “ abide its purity,” or relish that which should adorn the lives of all who embrace it. But though it would be thus less revolting to their natural appetites and passions, it would also be less an object of their esteem and admiration. It would lose, I think, more than it would gain in their eyes, and they would perhaps be farther from embracing it than when it wore a less accommodating aspect. But even if they

were thus induced to embrace it, they would neither embrace the true and unadulterated Gospel, nor would they in all probability proceed in their new course with genuine repentance and lively faith. *Their* Saviour would not be the object of their affection as "holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners." They would not hear from his lips, with the full and cordial approbation of true disciples, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15, 16.) *Their* Saviour would be shorn of those beams of transcendent brightness which belong to Jesus Christ; and *their* Gospel would not only in very many particulars, but in its general spirit, be "another Gospel;" not reflecting, like the true, the unsullied glories of Christ, but affording only a faint, obscure, and imperfect shadow of Him who is the image of the invisible God." *Such* was not the Saviour who came to "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." *Such* was not the Gospel given to turn men "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" nor can scriptural conversion be expected, however smooth and flattering outward appearances, through a Saviour and a Gospel so mutilated and disfigured.

I have hitherto touched only incidentally on the effect of an undue intercourse with the world, on the family and immediate connexions of the person who falls into this error, and on its effect also on those who live around him. It will therefore be necessary to consider these points more distinctly.

First—As to his relations and friends.

Here the mischief must be great and rapid; ten, twenty, thirty persons may be very soon injured by his inconsistent conduct; and among these there may be many far less prepared than himself for meeting

the threatened danger, far less fenced and guarded against its worst evils, and far less furnished with principles and habits which may lead after a fall to a recovery. Some may be very young and inexperienced, others particularly pliant and unreflecting, easily captivated by certain shewy qualities, or very averse to self-denial, or very open to flattery and self-delusion. Though his own bark should ride steadily, and preserve a straight course (no likely event) amidst the shifting winds and currents to which he ventures to consign it, what will become of theirs? And will he thus run the risk of destroying his "weak brother for whom Christ died," in a case in which to escape fatal evils is so difficult? Rather let him imitate the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who declared, that he would abstain for ever from a practice innocent in itself, (and who shall pronounce that worldly conformity is so?) rather than make his brother to offend: (See Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii.)

But particularly, my dear R., would I call the attention of any person undecided in his mind, or hesitating in his conduct, on the point under consideration, to the effect of his example on his children. How great will be their danger if, the habits of their parents on this point being lax, they are led from their infancy to dally with temptation by mixing too freely with the world, instead of being carefully taught, by example as well as by precept, that Christ's disciples are "not of the world," for that "he has chosen them out of the world!" So prone are the young to gratify their wishes, and so seducing are the pleasures which the world offers to them, that, humanly speaking, I see no prospect of their resisting the temptation to swim with the stream, if they are not early and long trained by the habits of their family, to stand in awe of so doing. As they advance a little in life, the young women will have to withstand the vivid sense of

pleasure, and the strong desire not to be slighted or ridiculed on account of their particularity, and comparative seclusion: and the young men will be assailed by still stronger temptations at school, and afterwards on a still farther entrance into life. Happy will it be (especially in the case of the latter,) if parental principles and the parental system so far maintain their ground in the youthful bosom, that though the tender shoots of religion may yield to the blasts and blights to which they are exposed, the root, at least, may be kept alive by the Spirit of God, in mercy to parents whom he loves, and send forth a fresh and more vigorous scion in after life! But let no parents look for this blessing, and presume to hope that their "labour will not be in vain in the Lord," unless in training up their offspring they are "sober and vigilant," and "always abounding," not only in their instructions, but in their example also, and their family institutions, "in the work of the Lord."

There are also other relations not to be overlooked: I mean such as, from their age and confirmed Christian habits, may probably not be misled by the example of a young relation; but who will be subjected to deep anxiety, and great pain, by his misconduct in the point under consideration. Among these *parents* stand pre-eminent. Think what parents must feel when they see their long course of instruction ineffectual; their example unavailing; their family habits abandoned, abandoned in a point so important, and so near their hearts; their feelings sacrificed to a youthful love of pleasure, or to the fancy, perhaps even the deliberate judgment, of one who ought, in wisdom and kindness, as well as in duty, to accommodate himself to their wishes. Could a young person lose much substantial good, even in his own judgment, by thus accommodating himself to the wishes of those who have his benefit at heart, in the restrictions which

they feel it necessary to lay upon his intercourse with a deceitful world? Or if *his* pleasure is to be balanced against *their* pain, is he sure that he gains more than he takes from them?

This appeal would be just, even in the case of an only child. How much stronger then, when there are brothers and sisters, in whose education, and confirmation in good principles and habits, parents will find their hands weakened by the indiscretion or obstinacy of one member of the family! When they contemplate the future, and especially the event of their being removed from their family by death, their fears of mischievous consequences will probably far exceed the evils they at present experience. Under such circumstances, how difficult the line of parental duty! To hold up one of their children as a warning to the rest, is a most painful measure, and one from which they will abstain as much as possible: but to avoid it altogether is not always possible or safe, consistently with their parental obligations. However guardedly and tenderly they perform this duty, it may lead to consequences which they would most anxiously wish to avoid, and the very danger of which will affect them most sensibly.— Surely when all these domestic considerations are united, they cannot be resisted by any young person without a degree of hardihood not very compatible with that gentleness, that spirit of accommodation and of deference to elders, and especially to parents, and that anxious endeavour to maintain harmony and unity with fellow Christians and relations, which the Gospel every where inculcates.

If the foregoing considerations ought to induce a child to follow the parental system, even when more than ordinarily rigid, and in some points perhaps liable to the imputation of going too far, what must be thought of a departure from that system, when it is marked by a spirit of accommodation as far as duty will permit; when it is neither offensive

nor obtrusive; when it endeavours to avoid extremes, and, taken as a whole, is moderate, and sanctioned, though perhaps with some exceptions, by the general practice of the decided followers of Christ? So strong are the temptations which assail youth in its pursuit of personal gratifications, or in its eagerness to shun singularity, and the ridicule attached to it—so great, in some instances, is its thoughtlessness as to consequences, and in others its love of a fancied independence—that such cases, it will readily be allowed, may exist: but at the same time no parent will like to dwell upon them.

These things must be said for parents; for (whether rightly or not) parents will often have too much delicacy and generosity to say them, at least to say them plainly and freely, for themselves: but the subject will not on that account press the less forcibly on their minds, and sadden their hearts. I do not like to enlarge on this topic, or to set forth the long train of benefits, with their attendant cares and labours, conferred on the one side, and the corresponding obligations contracted on the other. But could my voice be heard through the land, I should wish solemnly to leave these considerations to the dispassionate reflection of the young; and to call upon them to count the cost paid by others, and above all by a parent, for their departure from the principles inculcated in their education, and from the established habits of their families.

Secondly—as to the general effect on others.

I fear that an undue intercourse of religious with worldly characters is calculated to blind the eyes of the latter, as to their distance from God, and to lead them to think that cordial and vital religion is a thing more of profession than reality, and to view it therefore with disrespect. Now, whatever tends to bring Christianity down from her high eminence, must tend to degrade her in

the eyes of men, and to despoil her of her rightful authority, while it tends also to degrade her votaries, and particularly those who thus deprive her of her honours.

What I have said, and shall have occasion still to say in this letter, prevents my enlarging on this topic beyond a single observation. If the blessed Jesus himself was vilified as “gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners,” because he mixed freely with the world, though he mixed with it only to lead it to God, and to perform the sacred duties for the sake of which he came upon earth; what is likely to be said of those who mix with it too freely without his perfect innocence, without his native dignity or Divine wisdom, and without his object full in their view, and forming the life and soul of their practice? I believe no Christian of much experience will find any difficulty in answering this inquiry.

As this question, with respect to intercourse with the world, has been said to be a question of degree, you will ask, perhaps, for some guidance on that point. It is apparent, that within due bounds, the proper degree of intercourse will depend much on the personal character of the party, on the state of his family, and on the circumstances in which he is placed; and his best guide will be the Holy Spirit, operating through a watchful and enlightened conscience. But still something may be said on this subject, which may serve to point out certain rocks and shelves to be avoided in the Christian voyage, and to ascertain the limits within which the course of the vessel should, in all ordinary cases, be confined.

First, then, he must take care that his society shall consist chiefly of religious characters.

A man's companions will generally be chosen according to the prevailing bent of his own opinions and dispositions, and will therefore be no incorrect index of the state

of his soul. But if circumstances should throw him into a circle of persons differing materially from himself—such in the human mind is the power of sympathy, the propensity to imitation, and the desire to conciliate the good will of others, an object best effected by becoming like them—that he will probably soon begin to imbibe something of the taste and spirit of his new companions. It is vain for any one to hope that his good principles and dispositions, and his moral taste, will continue unsullied, if he associate much with persons of an opposite character. In hazarding the experiment he is trifling with one of the most powerful engines of good or of evil, according as it is used, which God has given to man; and he can no more control its operation, than he could change the course of summer and winter. Its force, though capable of being in a measure eluded and mitigated, cannot by any means be destroyed; and if applied in the wrong direction, it will not fail to impress on his soul baneful and, not improbably, fatal marks of its potency. We should at once allow this statement in political, and in merely moral points. What would be thought of any man, professedly loyal, who was much, and willingly, in the society of persons notoriously otherwise? What of a professedly sober or honest man who associated with the intemperate and dishonest? And what is there in religion to exempt the professedly religious man from suspicion as to his real principles, from the charge of inconsistency and folly, and from a progressive deterioration by means of his companions, if he mixes, more than the business of life and Christian kindness render necessary, with persons of an opposite character? On the contrary, he will even be more liable to suspicion, and he will also be in greater danger than the persons which have been mentioned, because, his conscience being more

Christ. Observ. No. 185.

enlightened than theirs, he acts in opposition to higher principles and more powerful checks. He professes to live in the love and fear of his God and Saviour, and to devote himself unreservedly to their service. He is aware that he cannot do this without the aid of the Holy Spirit, to “work in him both to will and to do, according to God’s good pleasure.” And how then can he hope to be a temple of that Divine Agent—to have that Spirit dwelling in his heart—if he does not act on the rules, and pursue the course best calculated to keep himself “unspotted from the world?”

2. He must abstain from intimacy with those whom he does not believe to be true Christians. Civility and kindness may be well preserved without intimacy. The latter, from taste as well as from prudence, should be carefully avoided, where we have not reason to think there is sound religious principle. From taste—because, if we value our high calling as we ought, we shall naturally feel a sort of repugnance to an intimacy with those who are “alienated in their minds” from that God and that Saviour whom we delight to serve: from prudence—because intimacy removes many of the guards and reserves which to a considerable degree regulate conversation and conduct in general society, and thus prevent bad principles and dispositions from exhibiting themselves to the view of others. Besides, if intimacy is avoided, that familiarity of intercourse between the younger members of two families, which would be dangerous, may be prevented, without the necessity of embarrassing explanations. On the opposite supposition, the whole case will be reversed, and the most lamentable consequences may be expected to follow.

3. Let a participation with the world in its assemblages for purposes of pleasure be avoided. There are many pleasures which the Christian

enjoys in common with men of a different character. There are others of which he cannot partake at all without a manifest dereliction of Christian duty. The latter, of course, must be altogether shunned: the former must be enjoyed in such a manner as not to render that which is safe and allowable in itself, unsafe and unfit from its attendant circumstances. Now the spirit of the world never breaks forth with less restraint than in its professed amusements. Not only do these very much remove customary guards and restrictions, but by being framed for the indulgence of worldly appetites, and dispositions merely natural, they draw these propensities forth into a more prominent display than usual. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, appear in decorous, perhaps, but in very intelligible shapes, and in connection also with so much that is good humoured and amiable, as to assume the most seducing appearance. Happy they who, having once entered the magic circle, escape its fascinations! Happy, if they do not become, in a measure, reconciled to the low and unhallowed principles of the gay crowd with which they associate! Of those who think that they pass through this fire unhurt, certainly the greater part flatter and delude themselves. At all events, the Christian ought not to incur the danger. Nothing is more imperceptibly imbibed than a worldly spirit, and nothing is more fatal than such a spirit to the very life and existence of true religion. It requires all the efforts and all the watchfulness of the Christian, even under favourable circumstances, to escape its infection. What then must be his danger, when he places himself in the very atmosphere where it abounds!—Is he not then flagrantly violating the precept implied in the petition which he so often addresses to his God, “Lead us not into temptation?” Instead of fleeing “youthful lusts,” is he not throwing himself

into the very region where they are prevalent? And if these questions cannot be satisfactorily answered, as they certainly cannot, let him solemnly ask himself still another, Whether he is not “giving place to the devil?”

4. The course of the Christian ought to be such as to shew clearly to what class of persons he belongs. He owes this full disclosure to God and to man, and of men to none more than to himself. If his conduct is equivocal, he either does not display the standard of his holy warfare, or he displays it only to dishonour it. In the first case, how can he hope to be acknowledged by Christ as his soldier? In the second, how can he hope for the meed of a good and faithful soldier? His light either does not shine before men, or at best it does not shine with such clearness and purity as to lead them to glorify his heavenly Father. By holding a course which leaves it a matter of any doubt whether he follows Christ or the world, he violates his duty to man as well as to God; for he is required not only to work out his own salvation, but to promote by every means in his power the salvation of all around him. But how can he hope in any measure to succeed in the latter object unless his conduct bear the clear stamp of the elevated principles of the Gospel, and therefore the stamp of their contrariety to the principles of the world? And how can he exhibit that stamp, if he slide into a similarity to the conduct of the world, in points in which Christians in general think that a decided and manifest distinction is requisite? The effect of this dubious system of conduct upon men of the world is very obvious? They will imagine, either that the profession of strict Christian principle is unsound, having more of pretence than of reality in it, or that Christian principle is a far lower thing, and approaches far nearer to the principles of the world at large, than is in fact the

case. On either supposition, their conversion to God will be not forwarded but impeded. How eager will the "god of this world" be to avail himself of such means of blinding men's eyes, and of keeping them from coming to the true light which alone can lead them to salvation!

But after all, he who adopts so dubious a course, and who seems so backward to choose whom he will serve, most injures himself. His consistency will be denied; and it must follow that either his sincerity will be doubted, or his good sense questioned;—he will be thought by some to have renounced and condemned vital and true religion, and by others to have disproved its efficacy or existence. Even if he ultimately escape the imminent danger to which he exposes himself of spiritual shipwreck, never can he hope to enjoy that elevation of soul, that solid peace and joy in believing, or that extensive influence as a servant of God, which are reserved for those who, "through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report," proceed straight forward in their Christian course, and are studious only to discover how much they can do for their great Lord, and how they can best "walk worthy of their high calling." Contemplate for a moment the prodigious difference in the eyes of men between the two following characters:—the one professing religion, but departing from the general strictness of its most esteemed professors; nominally classing himself with those who, as "a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people," are daily labouring, by God's power working in them, to obtain a victory over the world; and yet in practice seeming not afraid or disinclined to associate pretty freely with that world, and to join in its plans of unhallowed pleasure,—calling himself "a stranger and pilgrim upon earth," yet appearing to live among its inhabi-

tants rather as in his own than as in a strange country;—the other reversing this picture in all its parts, and, while he abounds in candour, and kindness, and beneficence towards all around him, conducting himself among the busy or the idle crowd, as one who views their pursuits in a very different light from that in which they themselves view them; as one who has higher aims, whose ruling affections have different objects, who orders his life and conversation as even now called to sit down, "holy and unblameable, and un-reprovable, in heavenly places with Christ Jesus," and to partake hereafter of all the blessings of his eternal and glorious kingdom. Is it not plain what a wide difference must appear in these characters, especially to those who have an opportunity of viewing them closely? Can it be doubted which will best reflect the adorable image of his Saviour, which will most adorn his own high and holy profession, and which will impress mankind with the greatest respect and esteem both for his own character and his religious principles?

And now, my dear R., it is time that I should close this long letter. You know that it has been dictated by a sense of duty, and by love for you; and I hope it is not stained by any disposition to severe criticism, or by a wish to deprive youth of its innocent and Christian pleasures. If I have pointed out dangers to which you do not think yourself exposed, and said things which you imagine I need not to have said to *you*, forgive me a wrong which has arisen from a recollection of *my own* youth, and from the warmest parental sympathy and anxiety for your temporal and eternal welfare. If my years have led me to be too cautious and too open to alarm, remember that yours may tempt you to be too unguarded and sanguine. Above all, reflect that on a point of such infinite importance,

it is incomparably safer to err on the side of caution and circumspection than on that of carelessness and temerity. I really believe that the love and fear of God are in your heart. May that blessed Spirit who has implanted them there, cause them to increase and abound and bring forth fruit to perfection! But when you read of the enemy secretly sowing tares among the wheat; and of a Demas who departed from the Apostle, because "he loved this present world;" you cannot be much surprised at the solicitude of your father, or think his admonition altogether out of place.

Yours most affectionately.

R. S.

To the Editor of the Christian Observer.

I HAVE perceived in your Number for March, p. 139, the animadversions of "a Layman," on a passage in the Notes of the Family Bible just published under the sanction of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. As I cannot but think this Layman has acted disingenuously both with respect to the venerable Society, of which he professes himself a member, and also the deserved reputation of the work they have sanctioned, I request the insertion of a few remarks on the subject.

The passage which has so greatly disturbed this Layman appears, as he says, in a note subjoined to Ephes. ii. 8. "*For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*"—He imagines that the note in question contains a denial of faith being the gift of God, and so is subversive of the doctrine of the Established Church. "Thus," he says, "heretical views are now sent into the world, under the sanction (doubtless unwittingly) of the Society;" and this Layman, in his alarm for the preservation of true religion amongst us, concludes with expressing his hope that "at least

this Bible shall not be circulated without the Book of Common Prayer." Doubtless this Layman's hope is, in this respect, in exact unison with those of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, and of all good churchmen.

But now it had surely been better for the cause of candour and truth, if this writer had read the *whole* of the note to which he refers, and not have drawn his conclusions from garbled quotations: for in this way, with a little ingenuity, any commentator may be made to say any thing. I beg leave then to supply what your correspondent has thought proper to omit, and leave it to the good sense of your readers to judge how far he is justified in his attempts to depreciate the value of one of the most interesting and valuable commentaries on the Scripture that has proceeded from the press.

The note referred to is an extract from the writings of Dean Tucker, and stands in the Commentary as follows: "Our translation of this passage is a little ambiguous; and many people have unhappily concluded from it, that faith is the gift of God; a gift, I mean, *in some peculiar sense*, such a gift as is *not* vouchsafed to mankind in general, like the gift of reason, or any other common blessing, [thus far only the Layman,] but is appropriated only to the select few who are thereby enabled to lay hold on Christ, while all the rest of their brethren are necessarily lost for want of it. Now this is a very great mistake; for the Scriptures contain no such assertion; and the words of the text, in particular, say nothing about any kind of faith, as a gift of God, but refer wholly to another matter. The assertion of the Apostle is plainly this, that salvation by grace is the gift of God; that it is not of ourselves, or to be derived from any works of ours, lest any man should boast. This is the substance of the doctrine; and

the original Greek can signify nothing else. But as to faith, that is mentioned only as the means, or instrument, of obtaining the salvation here declared."

Such is the *whole* note referred to, in a partial manner, by the Layman; from which it appears plain, that the writer of it is not here, by any means, denying faith to be the gift of God, but is (as he explains himself) combating the notion of its being a *gift* in that *peculiar sense* entertained by those who hold the doctrines of predestination and election. To enter into any discussion of the propriety or impropriety of this notion would be foreign both to the subject of the Layman's paper and my present purpose. But with respect to the passage in question it may be observed, that on a plain inspection of the Greek it certainly appears wonderful how any other view of it could ever be taken than that contained in the note from Dr. Tucker. The words stand thus: *Τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ τῆς πίστεως· καὶ τὸ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν. Θεὸς το δῶρον οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἵνα μὴ τις καυχῆσθῃται.* Here there cannot be a doubt that *τὸ τοῦτο* refers to the whole sentence going before, and, as Macknight suggests, may have *το πρᾶγμα* agreeing with it. There are then two several contrasts made between the *ἐξ ὑμῶν*, and the *Θεὸς το δῶρον*, and the *ἐξ ἔργων*, and the *μὴ τις καυχῆσθῃται*. But if I may venture a conjecture, I would rather suggest that *τὸ τοῦτο* here agrees with *το δῶρον*, and would propose pointing the passage as follows: "*καὶ τὸ τοῦτο, οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, Θεὸς το δῶρον, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων (εἰς scil) ἵνα μὴ τις καυχῆσθῃται.*" The translation will then stand thus: And this gift of God (namely, salvation by grace, through faith,) is not of yourselves, not of works, lest any one should boast.

I just add, for the satisfaction of those who may have been alarmed by the representations of the Layman, that if they will turn to the Epistle of St. James, i. 17, they will

then find that in their Commentary the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge have, in the words of Dean Stanhope, acknowledged that "every thing that tends to make us good, or is itself so, every spiritual perfection, comes to us from Heaven. All endowments of nature and grace are *given* by Him.....who is always the same, and always at hand."

OLD CHURCH.

To the Editor of the Christian Observer.

THE notes on the Family Bible published under the sanction of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, are, upon all points connected with doctrine and discipline, *professedly* compiled from the writings of the most eminent divines of the Established Church. The remarks on Ephes. ii. 8. quoted in your Number for March, in which a view of faith, as a "gift of God in a peculiar sense," is represented as an unhappy conclusion from the Apostle's words, are, I think it may be safely stated, at variance not only with the language of our Liturgy, but likewise with the opinions of a great number of our divines, justly celebrated for their learning, talents, and piety. The *opposite* sentiments of two prelates of our church occurred to my recollection as soon as I had read the note. The writers referred to are, Bishop Pearson and Bishop Sherlock; and to their judgment, as eminent divines, I should have expected the compilers of the Notes attached to the Society's Bible would have paid some attention on the important text in question. I beg leave to introduce *their* statements respecting faith as a *peculiar gift of God*, to the notice of your readers. My communication may possibly serve as an auxiliary to that of your lay correspondent, and shew the unison of our celebrated writers with the Liturgy of our Church, upon a doctrine which (to use the mildest term) has been explained away, as I

conceive, in the note intended for its illustration.

My first extract is from the exposition of the Apostles' Creed, by Bishop Pearson; a work in which deep learning and sound genuine piety are happily united. It will, I trust, prove no small gratification to your readers to be assured, that in one of our most extensive dioceses, this excellent treatise possesses a large share of the theological studies of the candidates for priest's orders.

In his exposition of the article, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," after stating that "the work of the Spirit is double; either external and general, or internal and particular;" and then shewing that this external work consists in revealing, through the inspired writings, the will of God to mankind, the bishop proceeds thus: "The same Spirit which revealeth the object of faith generally to the universal church of God, which object is propounded externally by the church to every particular believer, doth also illuminate the understandings of such as believe, that they may receive the truth: *for faith is the gift of God, not only in the object, but also in the act: Christ is not only given to us in whom we believe, but it is also given us in the behalf of Christ to believe on him; and this gift is a gift of the Holy Ghost, working within us an assent unto that which by the word is propounded to us.* By this the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul; by this the word profiteth, being mixed with faith in them that hear it. Thus by grace are we saved through faith, and that not of *ourselves*, it is the gift of God. As the increase and perfection, so the original or initiation of faith, is from the Spirit of God, not only by an external proposal in the word, but by an internal illumination in the soul, by which we are inclined to the obedience of faith in assenting unto those truths which, unto a natural and carnal man, are

foolishness. And thus we affirm not only the revelation of the will of God, but also the illumination of the soul of man, to be part of the office of the Spirit of God, *against the old and new Pelagians.*"—Vol. I. p. 495. Ed. Oxon.)

To the testimony of Bishop Pearson, I would now add that of Bishop Sherlock, a learned and pious prelate, and against whom, if a bias on the side of Calvinism be reputed a fault, it is well known not the slightest prejudice can be reasonably entertained. In the 2d volume of Discourses preached at the Temple Church, (Lond. Ed. 1759,) I find a sermon upon this very text, Ephes. ii. 8. In the introductory part of it, his words are as follow: "Life and immortality are the greatest blessings that we have any notion of; and these were brought to light by the Gospel of Christ. Him God gave for a Redeemer to the world, that whosoever believeth on him should not die, but have eternal life. And even that through faith in him we are saved, is the gift of God; for of ourselves we are able to do nothing. These things are taught us in the compass of the text: *we are saved by grace; we had no claim or title to salvation; but God of his own good will hath sent among us plentiful redemption; and according to the riches of his mercy, and the great love wherewith he loved us, hath, together with Christ, quickened us, who were dead in sins. The condition of this salvation on our part is faith; for we are saved by grace through faith. We must believe our Redeemer, that he cometh from God, and hath the words of life; and must rely on him to perform the word of salvation which is gone out of his mouth. But neither upon the performance of this condition can we say that our own arm hath saved us, or that we have done any thing towards perfecting our redemption; for this salvation is through faith, and this faith is*

not of ourselves; it is the gift of God."

In the sequel of the discourse it is shewn what must be the nature of that faith here said to be the gift of God; viz. "a trust and reliance on God, including a confident hope and expectation that God will perform his promises made to us in his Son. It is described as an active principle of religion, influencing the mind to obedience to the law of God." It is shewn at large that *this* faith must be produced by the agency of God's Holy Spirit, for that *faith which is only a mere assent of the mind, cannot be called the gift of God, "any farther than as sense and reason are his gifts,"* words which evidently imply that saving faith is a gift "*in a peculiar sense;*" and to prove this point appears to be the main object of this sermon.

I conceive enough has now been extracted from the writings of both these celebrated divines to shew their disagreement with the author of this note in the Society's Bible.

As a member of that Society, and regarding it as a successful instrument in the hand of God for promoting the interests of Christianity in the Established Church, I cannot but feel deeply concerned that, under its sanction, any notion should be encouraged which has a *tendency* to weaken our impression of the necessity of *preventing* grace, whereby God "puts into our minds good desires," and so derogate from the work of Christ, as the "*author,*" as well as the "*finisher* of our faith."

F. H.

For the Christian Observer.

ON THE NECESSITY OF MUTUAL FORBEARANCE IN DOMESTIC LIFE.

EXPERIENCE has shewn me the wisdom of the Scriptures in repeatedly enforcing the duty of mutual forbearance, and the urgent necessity of the practice of it, in all stations of life, and among all classes of per-

sons, in order to true and lasting peace and comfort.

I shall confine the following observations to domestic life; and I entreat my readers, that if, from Scripture and reason, I bring conviction to their minds, they will not hastily dismiss it, but will lay it seriously to heart, as a matter involving their own happiness, and that of many of their fellow-creatures, both in this life and in eternity.

The different dispositions and various pursuits of the individuals which form a family, frequently give rise to an opposition of opinions, and sometimes of interests. These diversities of taste and feeling, though perhaps innocent in themselves, and in some degree unavoidable, are the occasion of perpetual contentions, evil tempers, and divisions, those roots of bitterness which the prince of darkness too often sows and fosters, even among families professedly religious, and by which every fruit of the Spirit is checked in its growth, and the greatest scandal brought upon the professors and the profession of the Gospel. In some instances, I fear that even persons who pray and strive against many other sins, and scrupulously seek to keep themselves unspotted from the world, allow themselves, with too little compunction, to exercise unchristian tempers in their families; nay, are sometimes ready to bring excuses for them to their fellow-creatures, and their own consciences, on the score of infirmity, provocation, long habit, or the peculiar difficulty of their office and situation. Some of my readers may be ready to turn aside from this censure, as not applicable to themselves, because with passionate exclamations and feelings they sometimes lament their sinful tempers, forgetting that it is possible they may do this more on account of the natural inconvenient consequences arising from unsubdued passions, than from a penitential feeling of their being symptoms

of rebellion against God. Were the latter duly felt, sorrow would not fail to bring that true repentance by which sin is not only lamented but forsaken.

On the contrary, while excuses are made, and a "flattering unction" is laid to the soul, the evil will still remain: but true peace can never shine with its mild and steady beams, where there is not a spirit of mutual forbearance and conciliation. In these remarks, I address myself to parents as well as to children, to brothers and sisters, to masters and servants, and, in short, to the members of every relation of social life. In speaking of children, I refer not merely to those who are literally such, but to those who are grown up, and become, in some measure, the companions and friends of their parents.

Let it not be supposed that I am wishing indirectly to derogate from the lawful rights of parents, who, by their offspring of all ages, ought to be treated with honour and dutiful affection, when I remark that the happiness or discord of their families depends, in a great measure, upon their personal conduct and example. I have found, from my own observation, and I think it will hold good as a general rule, that from the tempers and habits of the heads of families, the whole household receive their general character. Let the master and mistress be steady to certain rules, having all things arranged decently and in order; being guided in the main by Christian integrity, forbearance, and kindness, and unbiassed by improper partialities; and I believe it is morally certain that the good effect of such a line of conduct will be seen to extend itself throughout the whole domestic circle, in producing a well-regulated and united family. Habits, engrafted on principle from early years, will have so established themselves by time, that no fear of a change will be entertained as the younger

branches grow up to maturity, and the beloved parent will with pleasure find that sober unprejudiced advice begins to supply the place of those commands which childhood required.

On the other hand, the varying, inconsistent conduct of the heads of a family, especially if accompanied with ungoverned and unforbearing tempers, will banefully influence the other branches of the household: each, unmindful of others, will seek his own ease and pleasure, bitter and endless disputes will ensue, disorder and insubordination will arise; love will languish, while distance and suspicion occupy its place. If this should occur in a family professedly religious, how great will be the scandal, and how extensive the evil which each individual concerned will have to answer for before the judgment seat of Christ!

Let those who are ready to extenuate the guilt of such unchristian conduct, by imputing it to constitutional infirmity, or the peculiar difficulties of their situation, beware how they thus virtually make God the author of their sin. No temptation hath befallen any of us but such as is common to man, and "God is faithful who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make us a way to escape." It is for want of recurring to this Divine assistance with full purpose and singleness of heart, by patient perseverance, prayer, and watchfulness, that Christians so frequently disgrace their profession, and are led captive unawares by Satan at his will.

Certainly when bodily infirmity is really in part the occasion of irritability, impetuosity, or bitterness of temper, (that is, when our spiritual enemy takes occasion from it to produce in us such works of the flesh,) the individual has the more need to use strenuous exertion, with unremitting prayer and vigilance, to be delivered from the snare of the

tempter. I believe there are few persons who do not find motives of interest or personal credit sufficiently powerful to effect a temporary command over their passions: surely, then, a constant sense of the immediate presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords would, if admitted, have a salutary influence in checking the evils of which I complain. Upon the whole, however, it will be found that nothing short of the grace of God, which is sufficient for all things, will be able effectually to root out these evils, when once established; and therefore I earnestly and affectionately exhort those of my readers who are under their influence, and are thus insensibly destroying or endangering their happiness in the present and the future world, to seek without delay, by the prayer of faith, the aid of the Holy Spirit, to turn them from the error of their ways, and to confirm them in a spirit of unity and godly love. The effect of righteousness, is quietness and assurance; but neither of these can be possessed while we are constantly agitated by the storms and tempests of passion.

Let us therefore work, now, "while it is called to-day," to subdue and eradicate every evil temper, without compromise or reserve. Let us meditate upon the various exhortations of the Scripture on this subject. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." "Forbear one another in love, and keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God." "Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, bowels of meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another." "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." Let us look

Christ. Observ. No. 185.

with faith to that great High Priest of our profession, who was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin;" let us remember the contradiction of sinners which *he* endured for our sakes, and let us pray and endeavour to be conformed to his blessed image. I conclude my remarks with the exhortation of the Apostle; "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

S. S. D.

FAMILY SERMONS.—No. CI.

Rom. xv. 13.—*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

WHATEVER be the subject discussed by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, he always speaks like a man whose heart and affections are deeply engaged in it. It is evident from the whole of his writings that the religion which he laboured to disseminate, was of a high and sacred character; pure in its injunctions, and elevated in its privileges. The Apostle was equally free from that spirit of enthusiasm, which expects the consolations of the Gospel without a desire to discharge its duties, and from that sordid misconception, which dwells wholly upon the precept, without regard to the promise. He knew, by his own experience, that the life which he lived was at once a life of obedience and of hope: it was his earnest desire, in whatever he did, to do the will of the Lord; and he found in all his labours that the presence of God was with him, and the comforts of the Divine Spirit refreshed his soul. In the privileges of the Gospel it was his ardent wish that all men

should be altogether such as he was: the love of Christ constrained him to abound in love toward others; and even for his enemies he was ready to invoke the mercy and the blessings of God. We cannot, therefore, wonder that for his children in the faith he was peculiarly earnest and affectionate in prayer: and that he was anxious that they might adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things, and might even here have their conversation in heaven, and finally receive an abundant entrance into the kingdom of Christ and of God.

In the chapter from which the text is selected, he is endeavouring to convince the Romans of the importance of certain duties, which in that day were sometimes apt to be forgotten: but he cannot do this without expressing his earnest wishes in their behalf, that they may possess in large measure the blessings of the Gospel. Whilst speaking of the comfort and patience which spring from the Scriptures, he prays, that the God of patience and consolation would grant them to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus: and again, while citing from the prophet the prediction respecting the Root of Jesse—that is, of Christ—who should rise to reign over the Gentiles, and in whom they should trust, he evermore lifts up his voice on their behalf: “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

In concisely examining the passage, we may consider—

I. The blessings which he implores for his converts.

II. The way in which they are to be obtained.

The blessings which he solicits are *joy*, *peace*, and *hope*.

This *joy* is represented in other parts of Scripture, as a rejoicing in the Lord—a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and in what belongs to him—

the glory of his attributes, the dispensations of his providence, all that he has done for his people, and all that he has promised. Those who have had the widest views of the goodness of God and the longest experience of his mercy have been most abundant in the joy of the Gospel. This sacred feeling often survives, undiminished, in the fierceness of tribulation. “Sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing,” was the testimony borne to the Apostles, by one who was the companion of their labours and the partner of their consolations. To the men of this world who knew nothing of the principles of true religion, it must have appeared a strange and inexplicable occurrence, that those who seemed to be of all men most miserable, should still be continually rejoicing. But was there not a cause? If we should ask the reason, what would be the reply? “We were once the children of darkness, but are now the children of the day. We once walked in the error of our ways, without hope and without God in the world: but he who caused the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts. We are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. We rejoice because he is reconciled to us through the Son of his love: we rejoice that he gives us the witness of his spirit, the earnest of every blessing in the future world. We know that all events are ordained in mercy by our heavenly father; and that no good thing shall he withhold from them that love him. We rejoice, therefore, in the present communications of his love, in the grace which he affords to us, in the consolations of his spirit; and we know that he never will forsake his people that trust in him.”

The next blessing which St. Paul implores for his flock is *peace*. This heavenly blessing is a distinguished privilege of the Christian; it forms a striking contrast between the men of

the world and the children of God. There is no peace to the wicked: even, literally, if we could look into their hearts, in how many cases should we see the workings of malignant passions, the strong conflict of unholy dispositions, which bespeak the dominion of sin: their heart is a fountain, from which flows every thing that is evil. They have no peace with God; for conscience tells them, whenever its voice can be heard, that God's wrath is kindled against them, and that at the day of his appearing he will render to them according to their evil deeds. But "peace is sown for the righteous." It was the legacy of our Lord to his disciples, and is still the portion of the humble Christian.

The Apostle prays for the Romans, that they might be *filled* with peace: and to the same purport it is said in the book of Isaiah, that if the people had hearkened to God, then should their peace have been as a river; that is, should have continued to flow with a constant and undiminished stream. The object of our desires should be, not that we may *sometimes* possess that peace which cometh from Heaven, but that it may *dwell* in us continually; that it may take an absolute and exclusive possession of our souls; and that God would subdue in us every passion which is inconsistent with it, and promote the growth of those holy desires and heavenly principles which tend to confirm and increase it.

The third subject of the Apostle's prayer is, that they might abound in *hope*.

Peace, joy, and hope tend mutually to the confirmation of each other; and those who are eminent for the possession of any one part of the blessings which the Apostle enumerates in his prayer, will usually possess also the others; but by mentioning them separately, and dwelling upon each in its turn, the Apostle seems to admonish his converts

with what earnestness they should seek for the attainment of each.

Hope is the great comfort and support of life: our happiness is generally in prospect; and if this friend of the wretched were banished from the world, even the season of enjoyment could impart no pleasure. But what are all the hopes and expectations, which this world can furnish, when compared with the hope of immortality! The worldly man delights in things which perish in the using; the disciple of Christ is animated by a hope which extends beyond the grave. His language is that of the Apostle, "I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." All worldly hopes are clouded by uncertainty: "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth:" but the hope of which St. Paul speaks is a firm and assured hope;—it is built upon the truth of God.

The effect of this Christian hope is of a purifying nature: "Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as God is pure." He constantly endeavours to avoid all sin: he seeks to obtain more and more of that holiness which shall be perfected in heaven; to become daily more meet for that inheritance towards which his hope continually aspires: he watches over every propensity which is contrary to the Divine will; and trusting that hereafter he shall be like his Saviour, when called to see him as he is, he seeks for the highest degree of conformity to his Lord which it is possible on earth to attain.

Having noticed the blessings which St. Paul implores for his converts, we may proceed—

II. To shew the way in which they are to be obtained.

It appears from the text, that joy, peace, and hope, are to be derived from God. In speaking of the bene-

fits to be obtained, St. Paul adopts that description of the Almighty which is best suited to his subject, and most directly calculated to inspire us with encouragement in our prayers. In a preceding part of the chapter, when entreating that they might possess a spirit of love and unity, according to Jesus Christ, he speaks of the Father as the God of patience and consolation; thus inviting us to cast our dependence upon him as the Author of those spiritual blessings which the Apostle solicits.

If peace and joy be associated with Christian hope, by what terms can we better describe the Author of these benefits, than that which is here adopted, "the God of hope?"

The declaration of this passage is consistent with other parts of the sacred volume. Whatever benefits we possess, whether temporal or spiritual, whether in relation to the present life or the future, are freely given to us of God. "Every good and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights;" and he that seeks true peace, joy, or hope, from any other source, will find all his labour end in disappointment.

In praying that God would fill them with these spiritual blessings, and then reminding them of the source from which all their hope and consolation must be derived, the Apostle does not intend to throw discredit upon the means of grace. On the contrary, he himself uses earnest prayer for these benefits; knowing that prayer is the usual channel through which they are communicated. But neither are we to suppose that joy, peace, and hope, will invariably be sent in answer to our prayers: many ask and have not, because they ask amiss: we must therefore desire to pray in that manner which God has enjoined, and with that spirit which he requires. Our prayer must be the prayer of faith.

This Christian grace is expressly noticed by the Apostle as the means of obtaining the above-mentioned

blessings; for he says, "All joy and peace *in believing*." They belong to that man only who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners. It is "being justified *by faith*," saith St. Paul, "that we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:" and in a similar strain St. Peter speaks, in his Epistle to the strangers of the dispersion;—"Whom having not seen ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet *believing*, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." It was this faith in Christ which gave them an assured confidence and persuasion that God was their reconciled Father. By it they were justified in his sight, and made heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. It is by faith that we are enabled to appropriate to ourselves the benefits of our Saviour's cross and passion; and thus to possess in our minds a lively impression of that glorious state which is the portion and inheritance of the people of God.

The Agent, by whom faith is implanted in our hearts, and by whom the blessings here mentioned, of joy, and peace, and hope, are communicated to us, is the Holy Spirit. The Apostle, therefore, prays that God would thus "fill us by the power of the Holy Ghost." By *His* agency the work of salvation is to be begun, and to be perfected in us. Whatever knowledge we possess of God as our reconciled Father, or of Christ as our Redeemer; whatever progress we make in that *spiritual* life, which is preparatory to *eternal* life, all proceeds from the influence of the Spirit of God, enlightening our minds, convincing our understandings, subduing our worldly affections, releasing us from the dominion of sin, imparting to us a new nature, and gradually leading us on in the way of holiness, till we become meet for a better state. We have no power of ourselves to do any thing as of ourselves. If we speak peace to our hearts, when

God has not spoken peace, it is a fatal tranquillity; if we profess to rejoice in Christ when our faith is not genuine, it is a joy which must soon vanish away; if our hope be built upon any imagined excellences of our own, upon any other foundation than that which God has laid, our edifice will not stand in the hour of trial. But he worketh mightily in them that believe; he witnesseth with our spirits that we are the children of God; he transforms us into the image of Christ; and, by the frequent communications of his grace, gives us a foretaste of happiness, so that even here the Christian is oftentimes filled with joy and peace, and enabled to abound in hope.

We may observe from this subject,

1. What a sublime view does it afford us of the work of salvation!

We perceive that all the persons of the Trinity are engaged in promoting it. We receive it from the mercy of the Father, by the mediation of the Son, and through the operation of the Holy Ghost. And yet many persons are found to neglect it! They deem it of little importance; although it excites so deep an interest in all the persons of the Godhead; although that interest has been exhibited to us by so many wonderful means; although it is for man that all these miracles of grace have been displayed, yet how little in general is he moved by a sense of his own wants, or by the mercy and goodness of God!

But behold what ground of consolation and encouragement are exhibited for the returning penitent. The Father is mentioned to us as the God of hope: he invites all to come to him through the mediation of his Son, and to receive the blessings of reconciliation and peace: he has promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth.

We may remark, 2d, How happy is the condition of the children of God!

If we observe them, even with respect to the present world, who is the man that may be fairly compared with the Christian? The most ordinary reflection will convince us that human happiness depends not upon the outward condition, but the state of the mind: if there be peace and tranquillity within us, of how little moment are all things external! The man who believes in Christ Jesus, and is influenced by the Spirit of God, has a source of consolation and of hope which nothing can disturb: he rises above all the changes and conflicts of this scene, to a purer sky, where the light of the Divine countenance shines serenely upon him; and peace, and hope, and joy, are shed abundantly around him. His treasure is in heaven, and his heart is there. He considers this transitory life as a short pilgrimage—a country in which he has no continuing city, and with which he has little farther concern in the way of sorrow or of joy, than as it affects his passage to his eternal home. Every successive day, in proportion as it weakens the hopes, and diminishes the prospects of those whose views are on this side the grave, serves only to animate his joy, and to enlarge his prospects. Though the outward man fails, the inward man is renewed day by day. The decay of the body, which so fearfully indicates to others their approaching dissolution, conveys the message to *him* that he is now to be set at liberty; to be released for ever from pain and anxiety, and to enter upon that glorious state, where peace and joy are to be his attendant portion. The moment which covers all other prospects with a veil of darkness, unfolds to *him* the realms of light, the kingdom of his Father and his God. The happiness which he

tasted upon earth has now its consummation: the communications of the Spirit are no longer imparted to him through circuitous channels, but flow directly from the Fountain in all their fulness and their purity!

MISCELLANEOUS.

To the Editor of the Christian Observer.

WHEN, several years since, I became acquainted with what is usually termed the Religious World, there appeared to prevail among the families composing it a jealousy, almost amounting to hard and uncompromising intolerance, of such books of amusement as professed to be compiled for the school-room library, unless the writers of these performances contrived to give them a decidedly religious tendency, or, at any rate, to wind up their stories with some very serious moral; and even then the compilations in question were seldom delivered out for perusal without many injunctions that the children were not to mind the entertaining part, but rather strain it out from the rest as vile and noxious. All this severity was one of the many exclusive systems which, in barring the door against a rush of possible, and, as I think, very probable, mischief, left no reasonable aperture for the ingress of what, under more liberal restrictions, might have been extremely beneficial. But the *principles* of the systematizers, in the instance referred to, were correct; and however injudiciously applied, the solicitude of the parents so applying them resulted, not from caprice, but from affection, and from a *moral* affection too, for their offspring, whose inexperienced years they dared not expose to the contagion even of contingent evil. The hearts, sir, of these philosophers were right; but when you remember the domestic libraries formed, or rather denuded, by their creed, and compare them with the copiousness and fashionable air of existing collections, you will

be tempted to suppose that the cautious philosophy of our earlier days resembled the scowling suspicions of still earlier monks, who hated every book which was *new*, without taking the trouble to ascertain whether its contents were really as novel as its exterior.

The desert book-cases which held their stations some thirty years ago along the parlour wall, looked sufficiently melancholy and sepulchral, and as though they had been constructed to imprison the spectres of departed literature; while their scanty and uncouth contents reminded one of the organic *reliquia* arranged in the cabinets of the fossilist, and which shew fragments of what were the herbaceous and animal products of a former, and perhaps an antediluvian world. The lapse, however, of about one quarter of a century, has produced an unforeseen revolution in the lettered taste of the religious public; and I, for one, have witnessed, with no very pleasurable feelings, the rise and rapid growth of a new order of things. I do not, in the spirit of a modern recluse, complain of it on the bare score of novelty: it is on far stronger grounds that I object to it, especially in the arrangements and general character of domestic literature among such persons as are, or ought to be, by their knowledge and profession of religion, self-excluded from any very familiar intimacy with the habits stigmatized by *themselves* as properly worldly.

To come to the immediate subject of this address, how are we to account for the present naturalization of fashionable literature in Christian families:

and especially of one class of books which in other days was universally interdicted in the self-same circle—*novels*? Observe, sir, I do not prefer this inquiry to the governors and members of families in general, but to those, and those exclusively, who speak of the line of demarcation necessarily separating the two grand moral divisions of society. By whatever name you choose to characterize these, it is perfectly well understood by the parties directly concerned in the matter under discussion, that there ought to be a difference, a definable difference, between themselves and the unthinking crowds which trifle and glitter around them.

Distinctions created by mere phraseology, costume, modes of address, or even adhesion to a religious sect, may exist, without any salutary influence on the mind; so that individuals very widely separated from the rest of the species by language, livery, and ceremonial, may be quite as irreligious as their fellows, and thus be only worldlings in masquerade. But the difference supposed, and required, by Christianity itself in its disciples, affects the current feelings, the tone and leading character of *the mind*, its usual train of thought, and its gratifications. If such be a correct view of this difference, it follows that spiritually-minded persons cannot meet the world at large in its modes of pleasure, without a violation of their principle. How then is the phenomenon to be explained, that two parties, professing to be (in relation to the objects severally pursued by them) irreconcilably disunited, do yet consent to be allied in their taste for the popular literature of the times? The same airy, sparkling, effeminate systems of philosophy—the same impassioned volumes of poetry—the same novels, polluted as they are by levity, profaneness, and false estimates of human obligation, seem to be dividing with ominous equality, the applauses of the two moral

divisions of society; as though *here* were a station where the wise and the foolish virgins might, with equal indifference to all consequences, slumber and sleep! This coalition of parties is the more inauspicious, from the circumstance of its being an union in *pleasure*. When it was once observed to Dr. Johnson, that a person's character might, perhaps, be most accurately ascertained by observing his favourite amusements, he said, "Yes, sir: no man is a hypocrite in his pleasures."

It is indeed pleaded, that, from the refinement of the age, works of fiction are no longer stained with the indecorum which characterizes the writings of Fielding, Smollett, and the novelists of their times. The plea is just; and if the expediency of encouraging works of fiction depended upon their comparative, or even their positive purity, the question would generally be determined in favour of modern writers—as far, at least, as the majority are concerned. But it argues a portentous want of moral feeling, when an apologist for novels insists on a formal production of expressions and sentiments obviously and flagrantly bad.* He would be but an unskilful artist, who could not draw up a story

* An admired and truly British painter of the French character observes: "In Paris there is nothing seen painfully to offend the eye; and this is enough to satisfy the Parisians that they ought not to shock the mind. They know nothing of the difference between virtue and vice as a matter of feeling. It must take the tangible and palpable shape of an action before they can perceive it; and even then their perception is not always correct. Where principles are unsettled, and duties ill understood, and worse practised, the most vicious will assume a companionable decorum of behaviour; for they will feel that they must not go much out of the common way; and, being on terms of familiarity with all around them, their iniquity will help to form a generally debased standard, instead of remaining distinct and odious, as a contrast to what is pure and valuable."—*Scott's Visit to Paris*, ch. ix.

essentially gross and anti Christian, in periods which, detached from their context, might defy the keenest scrutiny, and who had not dexterity sufficient to retort upon his accuser the chivalrous motto, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*;—Do not interpret my book by the depravity of your own mind.

The truth is, that in one sense, the best novels are the worst. They do not repel by undisguised levity: they look innocent, and therefore men think they may be conscientiously approached. And where has been the harm? No definable harm, perhaps, has resulted; no immediate explosion of romantic imprudence; all is quiet and tranquil, as before. But if the novel—I assume such to be the case—has been read with ardour and fixed attention, and with deepening interest as the circumstances of the story developed themselves, and gathered towards the catastrophe, will any observer of the human mind assert that no effect is produced? Are our minds so constructed as that they may be nailed, for hour after hour, to a work of fiction, but with no influence upon the passions? A great master of morals has given currency to the works of a novelist of the preceding century, by asserting that he taught the passions to move at the command of virtue. He would have written more accurately, had he supposed them to have fluttered under the excitement of high feeling. A state of excitement is the real effect produced by these writings, and which is not counteracted by some ten or twenty lines bringing up the rear of three volumes, and exhorting the reader to adore the loveliness of virtue.

I have seen enough of the world, sir, to convince my judgment of its selfish, alluring, and plausible character; and if a conviction of the understanding always governed the heart, I should perhaps venture farther than I now do, into the popular literature of this age. But I cannot

trust myself. I have gained such a share, at least, of practical wisdom, as warns me not to expose my passions to temptation. Though rendered somewhat torpid by time and serious engagements, I dread the still perilous influence of impassioned writers. They might yet persuade, or half persuade me, that this our present life is not exactly what the Scriptures, and my own experience and calculations, describe it to be; not a state of existence where to be really happy we must avoid being too impatient for happiness, where employment ensures more pleasure than indolence, and where it is very possible to be contented without perpetual stimulus.

With regard to my immediate concern with the popular books of the day, I own that I have been greatly embarrassed about admitting certain admired performances into my family circle, from the difficulty of ascertaining whether *any* novel were admissible, and then whether I could satisfactorily permit my children to have at their command even those which are honourable exceptions to the general run of novels. Up to the present hour, I have certainly forbid the entrance even of these. And why? 1st, Because, although my children (if you will excuse this domestic egotism,) possess, as I trust, many hopeful qualities, I by no means presume to look upon their characters as formed, or their minds as sufficiently pre-occupied with sacred instruction; and consequently I dare not entrust them with books which have, in my view, a direct tendency to secularize their feelings, to give them a premature acquaintance with the ways of the world, to stir up a busy curiosity to be better acquainted with a scene which, according to these stories, abounds with so much entertaining variety, and finally to cause them to feel a sensation of their own inferiority, at not having had a portion of the gayeties which diversify the lives of the wonderful

children and young persons there described. 2d, Because, finding that where a similar taste in reading exists, there will naturally follow a similarity of views in other things, I wish to draw a line of separation in books between my children and those families with whom an intimacy would be injurious. 3d, Because, whatever speed other children may have made, mine have not yet perused the standard, established classics of our country. My eldest daughter only finished Addison's critique on Milton five weeks since; and I tell her, that, according to the ancient code of lettered law, she must fairly purchase her right to run through the new publications by fairly studying the old ones.

It seems, indeed, that the books of to-day and yesterday, and such as are promised for to-morrow, are the only literature now in fashion. A lady reader, who occasionally visits my family, astonished me the other evening, when, after a two hours' criticism on the comparative excellences of Lord Byron, Campbell, Walter Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Moore, Leigh Hunt, Crabbe, Montgomery, Graham, and tribes of secondary names, this wide-reading critic did not seem to be aware that about forty years since somebody had written the lives of other poets, and that his performance constituted the finest effort of critical skill in the language: and to increase my wonder, she had neglected to peruse, in passing, only *Paradise Lost*, *Comus*, *Samson Agonistes*, *Dryden's Fables*, *Cato*, the *Castle of Indolence*, and, if I remember right, the *Night Thoughts*. Every work of fiction in prose she had read, except *Rasselas*, and "things of that kind."

A person familiar with current poems and novels is no cipher, I understand, in modern society. This familiarity is the passport to abundance of parties. Abundance of parties! The very phrase indicates that there is something in the system of Christ. *Observ.* No. 185.

modern reading which, while it is valuable to the thoughtless creatures who bask and flutter in the sunshine of *the world*, is obviously hostile to those whose better principles flourish rather in retirement, and who, when they emerge from the shade, offer a most ungraceful exhibition of inconsistency to the stare and secret ridicule of the very multitudes with whom they venture to mingle in unsafe pleasures. It is urged against the present manners of the Christian community, that in many instances they transgress the boundary assigned to them in the last age; and that, whatever may have caused the transition, its results have been injurious to the conceding party, without any perceptible benefit to the opposite. I should certainly calculate upon such effects from the acknowledged improbability of softening *any* sworn enemy by half measures, and especially by a process which bore upon it the impress of artifice and timidity. Let us beware of endeavouring to win over the world, lest in the desperate manœuvre we quickly retire with loss, and the loss in this instance will be all on one side. If we are not to think, to feel, to act, and to perish with the world, let a deep and wide interval yet exist between the habits of pleasure of the two parties. It is the duty of Christian parents to deny their dearest inmates those intellectual gratifications which cannot be separated from what has polluted many, and possesses at least the power of injuring all. Have we among us so little acquaintance with the philosophy of human nature, as to be blind to the effects of causes which act with noiseless, tranquil, unseen, and yet potent operation?

EXCUBITOR.

To the Editor of the *Christian Observer*.

THE following is an extract of a letter from a gentleman who has lately

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visited the native Christians in the neighbourhood of Travancore, and may be interesting to your readers, as furnishing an authentic account of their doctrines and discipline, which have been greatly misrepresented in the Abbè Dubois's letter to the Bombay Auxiliary Bible Society.*

B. T.

"Columbo, October 28, 1816.

"I will now leave Goa, to say something of the Syrian Christians whom we visited, and of whom I will hereafter send you a more complete account. You will be surprised to hear that these Syrian Christians are at present neither Nestorians nor Eutychians. They disclaim the errors of both, and profess to believe Christ to be very God and very man.—They, however, acknowledge seven sacraments. In baptism they use water only, and sign with a cross the eyes, nose, mouth, and ears; to signify, as they say, that these senses of the carnal man are to be obedient to the Cross. In the Lord's supper they use leavened bread, and stamp the wafer with a cross dipped in oil; but in neither of these sacraments do they use salt. They have two bishops, both residing at the same place; but only one of them appears to have any charge of the clergy. Their priests are ordained by the imposition of hands; and though they have but three orders, bishops, priests, and deacons, yet they have many different degrees in each order. I understand there are three among the priests, and four among the deacons. They formerly had archdeacons, but have none at present. They have many customs among them which mark them as an Oriental Church; but both their ceremonies and their doctrines have been much corrupted by the Church of Rome. They administer both bread and wine to the

laity; but the elements are then mixed together. They do not believe in transubstantiation; though they say the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken by the faithful communicant. They do not believe in purgatory, but they believe that there is a common receptacle, a *gehenna*, for the souls of men after death, into which Christ descended, in the interval between his crucifixion and resurrection, and to which they think he alluded when speaking to the thief on the cross; and that Christ, at his descension, relieved the souls of all then there; and that the souls who have died since, will remain there till the general resurrection, when they will be judged according to their deeds. In the mean time, the good are supposed to feel a pleasing hope of happiness, and the wicked a fearful looking for of judgment. They believe that certain saints and martyrs are in a heaven above this receptacle, and yet not admitted into the presence of God. They pray through the intercession of saints; but strenuously deny that they worship saints, and will not allow any images of them in their churches, professing that salvation is through Christ alone. Their liturgy and whole service is performed in the Syriac language, which is understood only by the priests; they have however, of late years, used in many of their churches the Malayalim translation of the Gospels, which was made chiefly by their present bishop, Mar Dionysius, (then Ramban Joseph,) under the superintendence of Mar Dionysius, who was the bishop in Dr. Buchanan's time. I was present at their performance of Divine service on a Sunday, and which, I am sorry to say, partakes in some measure of the superstitious mummeries of the Papists. They use frankincense, chaunt the whole service, cross themselves often, elevate the Host. On the Sunday, they

* Vide Christian Observer for 1816, p. 822.

have a very useful custom of reading a portion of the Gospels, in Malayalim, from the altar, and then briefly expounding to the congregation. They do not preach as Europeans do, nor use pulpits: they have no schools, and little means of teaching the poor; but this arises rather from their extreme poverty than from any unwillingness to teach and be taught. Indeed, considering the persecutions they have suffered from the Papists, and the proselyting ravages of Tippoo Saib, I am thankful and surprised that they still retain so much of genuine Christianity amongst them.

"The dress of the priests consists of loose white trowsers, with a white surplice and a red silk cap. The proper dress is of a dark colour; but they told us, that they were too poor to purchase it: each priest has a pastoral staff, generally tipped with gold. At ordination, the priests profess to sign the Canons of the Council of Nice, which are read to them by the bishop; but they could not shew us any copy of them. They, at the same time, swear to shave the crown of the head, and not to shave their beards; to fast on the fourth and the sixth days of the week: but they do not engage to lead a life of celibacy: this custom has crept in among them from the Romans. The bishop, Mar Dionysius, has lately sent a circular letter to his clergy, expressly stating that they are at liberty to marry: some have actually availed themselves of this permission, and forty more have declared their readiness to do so when their circumstances will admit. Their incomes are wretchedly small, merely fees and gratuities. They all, both bishop and clergy, earnestly besought us to give them copies of the Scriptures, both in Syriac and Malayalim. I had with me a few copies of the Syriac Gospels, the type of which

they consider as exceedingly beautiful. I hope the Bible Society will go on to complete that work: it is a highly useful well executed edition.

"The form and architecture of their churches is simple, and may be Syrian; the windows long and narrow, not pointed, as Dr. Buchanan implies. They possess very few books; I understood no printed ones but the Gospels in Malayalim; and besides the Scriptures in manuscript, they have some sacred hymns and their liturgy, which are often obliged to be carried from one church to another for service. The copies of the Old Testament which we saw wanted Nehemiah; and the New Testament had the Nestorian readings. Some books are also in their Canon which we do not call canonical.

"They were very much pleased with the Bishop of Calcutta's visit, and expressed a very earnest desire to put themselves under the protection of the English. Colonel Munro, the British Resident at Travancore, is doing a great deal for them: he has established a college for the better education of their priests, and employs many of them in his public office.—I must not omit to mention one interesting and truly pious custom of these Christians. The father of a family collects his children around him in the evening; and sitting on a sod on the outside of his cottage, he reads or repeats portions of Scripture to them. These, of course, consist chiefly of such passages as are most easily understood and retained in the memory—the parables, the passion and death of Christ, &c.—which he explains, and dilates on the doctrines and duties of Christianity as he is able.—Here, then, is a promising harvest: if the Lord but send forth reapers, every thing may be hoped for where we find so much zeal and piety, and so much inclination to be instructed."

REVIEW OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

The Doctrine of Regeneration practically considered. A Sermon preached before the University of Oxford, at Saint Mary's, on Monday, February 24, 1817. By DANIEL WILSON, M. A. of St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, and Minister of St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row, London. London: Hatchard. 1817.

WHEN Theseus had exhausted all the efforts of genius in the hope of escaping from the labyrinth of the Minotaur, Ariadne put into his hands a simple clue by which he was able to trace out all the intricate windings of his prison. The moral which possibly the ancients, with whom signs were things, might have designed to convey by this fable was, that simple means are often able to accomplish that which might be in vain attempted by all the refinements of genius and knowledge. Such, at least, we conceive, is the truth which is illustrated by the sermon before us. We by no means cast any imputation on either the erudition or the talents of the reverend author, when we affirm that his honesty and common sense have led him to a plain, simple, and practical manner of treating the much-controverted topic discussed in this sermon, which promises more for the elucidation and establishment of Christian truth, than all the dialectics and ratiocinations of a severer learning. He has supplied the proper clue by which we may safely follow the windings of this theological labyrinth, and escape the monsters of controversy and heresy which watch at the mouth of it. We shall allow the author himself to explain his views upon this subject.

"In the consideration of all questions in

practical religion, there will generally be found some fundamental principle to guide us in our inquiries. If this principle be rightly apprehended, smaller difficulties will commonly disappear, or cease materially to embarrass our judgment. We can scarcely, indeed, expect, without a presumption bordering on a claim to infallibility, to escape every error in the determination of any extensive subject. If we wait for this, we shall wait in vain: but if we are careful to seize the leading features of truth, as they are drawn in the holy Scriptures, we shall be successful in the main object of our studies; we shall be right, where it is most important to be right, in the essential doctrines and duties of Christianity. Whereas, a contrary course is ordinarily the prelude to disappointment. If we begin our inquiries respecting any of the great doctrines of the Gospel, by a precise and minute adjustment of inferior topics; if we laboriously occupy ourselves in ascertaining, to a nicety, the degrees of probability on the one side or the other, in matters of doubtful disputation, whilst we pass slightly over the chief and controlling considerations connected with it, we are not very likely to arrive at a sound decision. Refinements are lost on the great bulk of mankind, and lost upon ourselves. It is by great and energetic principles that the affections of men are moved; principles which, derived manifestly from the unerring oracles of God, and acting powerfully on the consciences and lives of men, though they leave behind them untouched various points of smaller importance, yet at once gain and sway the heart." pp. 5-7.

This, then, is the clue by which we may hope to escape from the perplexing and dangerous tortuosities of those subtle reasonings by which men, more able than sincere, sometimes love to puzzle a plain question. We conceive that the principle on which this suggestion of the author will be found to rest, is perfectly sound: it proceeds, in fact, on the assumption that all which is essential to be known may be known by the honest and

devout inquirer ;—that our great Instructor, although he has veiled the truth to him who would look down upon it from the lofty eminences of human science, reveals it to him who approaches in the attitude of conscious infirmity and devout humiliation. And this principle, we venture to say, is more frequently exemplified even in the discoveries of art and science than the mere scholar is willing to allow. We probably owe the art of printing, for instance, to one whose profession authorized the expectation of no such gift to the world of letters. The machinery also, to which the manufactures of our country are principally indebted, is the discovery of a common workman ; and that philosopher, who in our own days has most enlarged the boundaries of science, who has improved the instruments of philosophy to an extent which raises this age above every other in the annals of astronomy, who has given us a familiarity with the heavens of which Kepler never dreamed and to which Newton never soared, owes his discoveries still less to the circuitous efforts of scientific research than to the simple and humble labours of common sense. These men have reached the interior of the temple of science, not by breaking through its walls at some elevated points, but by stooping to the low and narrow door of self-distrust and humiliation by which it is appointed to be entered.

But whatever may be the case in other instances, our position is eminently true in religion. There are usually certain prominent and leading truths connected with every important question, on which he who keeps his eye steadily fixed, and his heart really intent, will not be suffered to wander fatally wide of the mark. And here, perhaps, we may be permitted to say, that we should have been happy if the work of the reverend author had afforded him an opportunity of entering more widely

upon the discussion of the two following topics :—in the first place, why men are so apt to run away from the consideration of the great fundamentals in morals and religion ;—and, secondly, what are the evils which have arisen in the present controversy from thus merging the great in the subordinate topics of the discussion. It is not, of course, for us to presume to supply the author's place ; but we will take the liberty of touching for a moment upon these two points.

The great cause then, as it appears to us, by which men are tempted to pursue what may be called the accidents of moral questions, and to leave their substance untouched, is, that a decision as to the first may have no bearing upon the life, but that a decision on the last may and must be conclusive as to their state and character. It matters little to the worldly man, for example, whether we ought to stand or kneel in prayer ; but it matters infinitely to him whether devout prayer be a duty or not.

Another temptation which inclines men to investigate chiefly the minuter parts of a subject is this—that they conceive they shall obtain a higher reputation for learning and refinement, than by dwelling upon the parts that are more prominent. The operation of this cause may be perceived in literature and art. In the advanced stages of literature, for instance, and after the stock of obvious images and sentiments has been exhausted, how generally are writers seduced into an artificial and affected style of composition, not always because their taste is worse than that of their predecessors, but because they are willing to try a new road to fame, and to aim at the only distinction which it is now possible for them to attain ! In like manner, in works of art, how soon does the laborious skill of the Flemish school succeed to the nobler manner of the Roman—not always, perhaps, through

a deterioration of taste, but frequently from a desire of reputation. But it is in morals and religion that the evil is most predominant. Hence the subtle discussions of the old schoolmen and of the modern casuists—men who ought to have had both wit and honesty sufficient to prefer questions of practical utility to those laborious triflings which too often occupied their whole attention.

But a third and most efficient cause of this error, is the ungenerous desire of sophists and partisans to hide the truth, by spreading over it the cobwebs of minute distinctions. A man of simple mind is marching in a right line to a sound conclusion. A polemic detects him in the fact, and discovers at once that this right line is the road to conclusions the most opposite to his own. He therefore contends, that the straight road is the wrong road—that the level path is the path of ruin—and that the very ease with which he advances is a proof he cannot be treading in the rough and arduous ascent which leads to the almost inaccessible temple of Truth. Misled by such representations, perhaps, the plain man yields to the conviction that he ought not to walk so well.

We would urge on many of our readers, and especially on the young and unwary, the considerations which we have here stated. Truth is ordinarily simple; and it is rarely, and for no good purpose, that the goddess is invested with a cloud. The well in which wisdom is said to lie hid, is rarely too deep for an honest and industrious mind to fathom it. When, therefore, difficulties are spread over a plain truth, by any one who is, at the same time, a scholar and a partisan, the reader should consider them but as the dust of warfare, which is raised to conceal the march of an advancing enemy.

But let us touch for a moment on the other point; namely, the actual evils which have arisen in the con-

troversy upon regeneration, from too often merging the main doctrine which it involves in subordinate topics of discussion. Hence, we conceive, it is that the great question, whether or not our own hearts are converted, has been postponed by many warm polemics, and their admirers, till the contest about lower matters is decided. Hence, again, it happens, that many writers and verbal disputants obtain a reputation for religious zeal, who care, perhaps, for little but the defence of their own particular systems. Hence, also, it is that many of these advocates have exhausted their time and strength in fighting for points, the adjustment of which would not, in the smallest degree, assist in the decision of the main question; and this not in the spirit of men who have undertaken to decide on subjects of vital importance to the whole family of man, but as they would enter the lists in a gladiatorial exhibition. Hence, in a word, we are threatened with the sad consequence, that this controversy, which, under the Divine blessing, might be made to promote the interests of truth and the salvation of souls, may pass away and leave many of those who were most deeply engaged in it in their original state of darkness and indifference. We always indulge the hope, that when this sort of moral earthquake takes place, many contrite inquirers will be found at the feet of the ministers of religion, asking, "What shall I do to be saved?" And if in this hope we should now be disappointed, we are persuaded that one of the main causes will be, that some of the disputants themselves, and still more of their readers, have fallen into the error which we are deploring.

But it is time that we should return to Mr. Wilson, the great object of whose sermon is to shew *the infinite importance of that change of heart which must be wrought by the Holy Ghost in every unconverted*

person, to fit him for the kingdom of heaven. This point he endeavours to establish by three distinct considerations :

1. By the manner in which this change is described in Scripture ;

2. By the place assigned to it in the holy writings ; and,

3. By the intimate connection of the doctrine teaching the necessity of this change with every part of the Gospel.

The passage in which are collected the scriptural statements respecting the importance of this moral change, though aiming perhaps at too nice a discrimination, is, we think, just and striking.

"The various images employed to describe this change in the holy Scriptures, are eminently calculated to exalt our ideas of its magnitude. Let us contemplate these descriptions in their grand outlines. If the general and entire change of the whole soul is regarded, it is described as a new birth, a new creature, a being awakened from sleep, and quickened from death and the grave. It is even compared to the light and order and beauty deduced from the original chaos by the Divine command, and to the resurrection effected by the exceeding greatness of God's power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. If the governing principle is viewed, it is described as a change of mind, a law inscribed on the heart, a light shining into the soul, an epistle of Christ written by the Spirit of God. If the universal effects of this change are considered, it is represented as a conversion or turning from sin to God, a transformation by the renewing of the mind, a participation of a divine nature, and a conformity to the image of Christ and of God ; it is the wax yielding to the seal, or the metal receiving the impress of the mould. If the more particular consequences of incipient sanctification are exhibited, then the Christian is washed from uncleanness ; puts off the old and defiled man, and puts on the new ; appears in a wedding garment ; casts away the works of darkness, and clothes himself with the armour of light ; is crucified to sin ; assumes the yoke of his Saviour, and offers himself a living sacrifice to his service. If, again, the course on which he enters is especially regarded, he then becomes a merchant-man seizing the matchless pearl, a disciple at

the feet of his Master, a servant obeying his Lord, a steward occupying with his talents, a soldier contending under his Captain, a wrestler labouring in the struggle, and a racer breathless for the prize. If, moreover, the powerful operation of grace in this change is considered, it is then compared to the recovery of the wandering sheep after a painful search, to the healing of an inveterate distemper, the surprise of a fortified castle, or the rescue from the power of a foreign foe. If the outward manner of effecting it, it is a calling to the fellowship of the Gospel ; or, if the gradual and imperceptible influences of the Spirit, it is as a wind blowing where it listeth ; as ground made good and fertile ; as a tree newly receiving the graft, the incorruptible seed taking root, the leaven fermenting the mass, and a well of water springing up to everlasting life." pp. 16—18.

The part in which the intimate connection of this doctrine with all the fundamental truths of Scripture is delineated, is not less convincing.—Nothing, indeed, can be more obvious, than that, if man is deeply corrupt ; if God is infinitely holy ; if the Judge of all the earth requires of us a growing conformity to his own image, and to "the mind" of Christ ; if the character of heavenly occupations and joys demand in their possessors the sublimest elevation and unmixed purity—a change total and absolute is necessary to fallen man, in order that he may begin to comply with the requisition of his God, live up to the grandeur of his destiny, and acquire in the school of this lower world a capacity for heaven, a "meetness" for the joys and employments of the world of spirits. Strike out these doctrines from the Gospel, and the *a priori* argument, at least, for the necessity of a moral change will be weakened, and miserable man must be left to enjoy the sad privilege of living and dying, undisturbed, in the bondage of his corruptions. If the statue of Prometheus had not been intended to perform the functions of manhood, what need was there to scale the heavens for fire to animate it ? It might properly have slumbered

ed in cold and torpid dignity upon its pedestal. But if the stone is to live, and to think, and to act, the vivifying flame must descend from heaven. And thus it is in the case of human nature. If man may with impunity remain corrupt; if God is not holy; if heaven is not a holy place, then the moral change may be in a measure superfluous. But if much is demanded and expected of man; if the highest prospects are unfolded to him; if heaven itself "rejoices over one sinner that repenteth;" if the lines of original corruption must be erased, and the Divine nature communicated to us; then, evidently, a transformation is necessary—a transformation involving scarcely a smaller advancement in the scale of being than creation itself—a transformation to which He alone is competent who requires this advancement in His creatures. Such is the substance of Mr. Wilson's argument; and, if we have chosen rather to condense than to extract it, it is only because we wish to obtain space for the other quotations.

The author, having arrived at this point in his argument, thus states his own conviction as to the probable results of pursuing or neglecting the mode of viewing this subject which he advocates:—

"I have pressed these various points with the greater earnestness, because they are calculated to exhibit, in a striking point of view, the nature of this great incipient work of the Spirit. If the student, instead of seizing at once the grand substance of truth in this respect, languish in hesitation; if he listen to the treacherous subtlety of his own heart, or lose himself among the objections of a sickly imagination; if he consult a luxurious and corrupted world, or lend himself to those who confound fervour with intemperance, and the most sober and enlightened piety, if it be spiritual and energetic, with enthusiasm; or if he dispose of every thing with an indolent carelessness, and sink the chief force of the great truth before us, in the outward transition from heathen or Mohammedan superstition to the profession of the Christian faith, it is impossible for him to succeed.

Truth was never attained by such a method: he is not in a position to survey the extensive field: he wants the state of heart requisite to a right decision. Whereas, if the main question be first felt and understood, and the supreme magnitude and importance of a change of heart be adequately known, no material difficulties will rest on his mind. Being right in his leading principles, subordinate points will either lose their importance, or assume nearly their appropriate place." pp. 32, 33.

He next proceeds to illustrate this statement by applying the rule he had laid down to several distinct questions connected with the controversy on regeneration. He first shews how unlikely *those*, who have right conceptions on the subject of this moral change, are to fall into certain newly-revived errors on the subject of baptism, whether in the case of infants or adults. After some other observations, we come to the following solemn address, near the conclusion of the sermon.

"Is it not then possible, waving all the minuter points of controversy, that some of us, without being aware of our danger, have not taken a right view of the real magnitude of a change of nature? Is it not at least possible that if we felt more deeply our own depravity, and estimated more highly the work of the Holy Ghost in changing the heart, we might be more successful in our religious course? Would not a new disposition and frame of soul go to the bottom of the case? Would it not supply the very thing which is wanting? Do not great and controlling principles govern the human mind? And is it not most likely that a master-spring within—a new principle of life and holiness—would lead to the very success we now want? And may it not then be our wisest course to omit smaller matters of dispute, at least till the governing truths of the Gospel have more entirely filled our souls, and in humble supplication we have implored with greater earnestness the illumination of the blessed Spirit of God? And are we not most likely to arrive at the grand and substantial principle, really involved in the great question under review, by this plain and practical method, in a matter which confessedly depends more on the state of the heart, than on the cold deductions of abstract reasoning?" pp. 51, 52.

In this view of the subject we most cordially concur; and we conceive that one chief merit of the Sermon before us lies in the simplicity and earnestness with which the duties delineated in the above extract are pressed upon the reader.

It is a feature in the constitution of our nature, that one sense can but imperfectly perform the functions of another. The blind man conceived the colour of scarlet to be much like the sound of a trumpet: and thus the man whose moral sense is not awakened, and on whom the ray of heavenly light has not descended, may often make mistakes equally absurd in matters connected with religion.

We know, indeed, that some of the advocates for the error in question contend, that "the *actual* state of baptized persons proves nothing; that they may have had a new nature bestowed upon them at baptism, and have forfeited and lost that new nature." But, to say nothing of the point of doctrine involved in this hypothesis, is not every presumption on the other side? The millions around us *were born* with corrupt hearts; and, if facts may be believed, they have *now* corrupt hearts. Is it not then a reasonable presumption, though not absolutely a logical deduction, that what the heart *was*, and *is*, it always *has been*? A plant may indeed, be found, in the revolution of a year, twice in a state of torpor and barrenness; and yet, during the interval, its barren and lifeless head may have been crowned with vegetation and glory. In this instance, however, no bye-stander could have failed, during the period, to discover the progress of the change. But where is there any thing analogous to this in human nature? Does the child (we put the question solemnly, and without any feeling of levity on so important a subject,) just emerging from the baptismal font, evidence any decay of selfishness, any fresh budding of holy and amiable

Christ. Observ. No. 185.

qualities, any rising of the "sap of virtue," any expansion of the flower? Can the most tender mother note on the tablet of her ready memory any accession of new and holy qualities in her newly baptized child? Has she not still to contend with the same selfish, wayward, capricious feelings as before? The fact is against the hypothesis: all reasonable presumption is against it; Scripture has not yet been proved to be in its favour: if, therefore, it is to stand at all, it must stand on the *ipse dixit* of a few zealous controversialists, whose zeal is no certain argument of the truth of their positions.

But we will not resume the discussion of this much-agitated topic. The controversy has, in our judgment, even already been of considerable use: large concessions have been made, are daily being made, and will, we doubt not, continue to be made, by the advocates for a baptismal change. A closer examination of their own hearts, of the state of the world, of the language of Scripture, will assist in multiplying these concessions; and we trust they will go on conceding to the cause of truth, till they have left nothing requiring concession; that the hitherto discordant elements will at length combine; that the parallel lines will converge; and that, somewhere on this side the grave, the angry disputants will put up their swords, and, in the spirit of their compassionate Master, hasten to heal the wounds which anger may have inflicted.

It is because Mr. Wilson's sermon is calculated to heal divisions, without compromising truth, that we have thought it right to give it this extended notice. He has sometimes been a little less attentive to his metaphors than to his arguments; and we think he may usefully employ the opportunity afforded him by a second edition, to render the composition as correct as the reasoning is sound, and the temper Christian and charitable.

2 S

Plain Scriptural Sermons. In two Volumes, by the Rev. R. P. BEACHCROFT, M. A. Rector of Blunham, Bedfordshire; dedicated to the Right Hon. Lord Grantham. pp. xv. 314, and xi. 335. London: Hatchard. 1816.

Sermons preached at Welbeck Chapel, St. Mary-le bone. By the Rev. THOMAS WHITE, M. A. Minister of that Chapel, and late Vicar of Feckenham, Worcestershire. pp. xvi. and 461. London: Rivingtons. 1817.

WE agree with Mr. Beachcroft, in his preface to the two volumes of sermons mentioned at the head of this article, that "we have each of us our peculiar manner of expressing and enforcing the grand subjects of Christianity:" and we should extend the observation by adding, that hearers and readers of sermons have each their peculiar modes of feeling and judging upon the same awful subjects. It is to this great diversity of disposition, arising from whatever cause, that we are principally indebted for the unceasing production, disappearance, and reproduction of the vast mass of divinity which is almost weekly passing under our notice; and in no form more generally, than in that of the old-fashioned, and long-favoured, genuine English sermon.

Sermons, the easiest of all serious reading, and perhaps not the most difficult of all serious writing, seem to afford the widest range for that endless variety both of thought and style: conception and execution, which is most suitable to the diversities of the human mind. Derived immediately from the word of God, the subjects for this species of composition are never at an end; and may truly be said to reach as far as the infinite resources of divinely revealed Wisdom itself, acting on all the possible circumstances and feelings of human existence. Not only does the Bible contain an inexhaustible store of sacred texts, each one differing from the other by some

darker or lighter shades, but even each text, more particularly in an age when it is not quite the fashion, as in Barrow's time, "unfairly" to exhaust our matter, may be made capable of yielding different products under different hands. According to the deeper or more superficial examination of it we derive "strong meat for them that are of full age," or only "milk for babes." Viewed in connection, or not, with the context, we find in the sacred words a subject prepared to our hand, or a motto only to one of our own choosing. Of this subject, any part is chosen or declined, at the will of the preacher; and different preachers perform an office similar to that in the lower creation of different bees on the same flower, one of which extracts the honey, and another the wax. Of course the choice will be strongly biassed by the peculiar views of sacred truth taken up by each: and with the same views, as fancy or judgment predominate in the mind, so will their appropriate produce give colour to the composition. Hence as writers of every description find scope for the exercise of their peculiar talent in this species of writing, so readers of all descriptions (we of course mean of those assuming the profession of religion, and which compose a vast and a mixed multitude,) severally find here their congenial food. And when to this we add a large class of clerical readers, *with perhaps a particular object*, which, we humbly presume to suggest, might be better accomplished, were they to become *writers* instead of merely *readers*, we can be at no loss to account, even without reference to the principles of Mr. Malthus, for the constant demand for this intellectual supply, and the prodigious fertility of the age in its production.

Whilst the fact here stated sufficiently of itself speaks our excuse for not embracing within our very limited pages all the notices that either the authors or we ourselves

might wish of the several publications in question, it must plead our apology for occasionally attempting a degree of classification to assist us in this part of our duty. And though in classing together, under the present article, the two highly respectable names of Beachcroft and White, we are confident of placing those together who will rejoice to be recognised as of the same genus: yet we are conscious also of making that kind of arrangement which joins individuals specifically different, whilst they are generically the same. Our object in so doing will perhaps appear to be, in a measure, of a mixed nature, not without some view to the effect of displaying the two species in juxtaposition with each other; and making such general observations upon both, as may at once express our opinion on the more legitimate style of sermon-writing, and put our readers in the way to choose, upon evidence of their several advantages, between the two.

We have first then to state, in assigning to our present authors their place amongst the numerous and heterogeneous varieties above alluded to, that as to the nature of their doctrine we perceive no fundamental distinction between them. They are thus far of the same class; and we may safely assert the main object of both to be, that of leading their hearers to a knowledge of the true method of salvation, by a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, evidenced in all the corresponding fruits of the new life. The distinction between faith and works in the office of justifying the sinner before God; the nature, and vital necessity of the renovating change through the grace of the Holy Spirit; and this as sacramentally exhibited in the rite of baptism, have been of late so fully laid down, and the views of our Church respecting them in her admirable formularies so clearly ascertained to be in agreement with the plain and une-

quivocal dictates of Scripture, that we own we should have been unwilling to have associated two writers together, for any purpose, who seemed to us widely to differ from each other on these essential points. A material disagreement on any one grand doctrine, which could fairly be represented as an "*articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*," would have left us little leisure or inclination for discussing any other point of diversity between them. On the great articles of doctrine here mentioned, as issuing from, and seen in connection with, the depraved condition and total excision of man's original nature from the favour and glory of God, we perceive a substantial agreement in our two authors; such an agreement as cannot fail of marking the strong and imperishable nature of truth even in minds otherwise, we should apprehend, very dissimilar from each other. Our readers will be pleased to receive from both these pious writers such instructions as are conveyed in the following remarks.

"By this expression, 'virtue is gone out of me,' we may understand the secret communion which the humble Christian holds with his God, by fervent prayer and other devout religious exercises. It is by the constant use of these means of grace, that the believer obtains the assistance of God's Holy Spirit to sanctify his corrupt heart. By faith, hope, and charity, he becomes like-minded with his blessed Master; by a spirit of dutiful obedience springing from faith, he is engrafted upon Christ the true vine; he daily brings forth more fruit, and by it his heavenly Father is glorified. Thus the same vital principle, the same virtue and efficacy which pervade the parent stock, give life and vigour to the branches; they shoot forth abundantly, they become fruitful in every good word and work." Beachcroft, vol. I. pp. 31, 32.

Again, in Sermon II. on "the constraining Efficacy of the Love of Christ:"—

"In the day in which he [Adam] disobeyed God's positive commandment, he died in all his faculties and powers: he sustained a grievous loss; he contracted a

deep stain ; the sentence was passed upon him, and upon his posterity, not merely that he should die in a temporal sense, but that he should die eternally. All the precious gifts were lost which had been given him, and he became the bond-slave of that old serpent who had tempted him to sin.* Thus in Adam all died." Beachcroft, vol. I. p. 108.

" Salvation is every where promised to faith in that Saviour, who has purchased this blessing for a lost world : and faith, if it be the saving faith of the Gospel, will be fruitful in every good word and work. Faith is said to be the gift of God, and they who believe, are said to be given by the Father to the Son, as the purchase of his sufferings. ' All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me ; and whosoever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out ; ' of those whom thou hast given me, have I lost none.' God must be,—he was, and ever will be,—the Author of every good and perfect gift, and amongst these, gifts of faith. ' Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' As then by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.' Lay the whole of Scripture together, as it speaks of the efficacy of the Redeemer's sacrifice for sin, and you will find, that he offers you this greatest and best of gifts, salvation, without money and without price. In this manner ' the love of Christ will constrain you to be obedient, because you will thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : ' you will rejoice in a new principle of life thus conferred upon you ; you will remember that he died, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again. Ibid. pp. 111, 112.

Again, in Sermon VIII. on Enoch's Removal :—

" Before man can hold converse with his Maker, he must have a new nature given him ; his appetites, his inclinations, his desires, must be turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. Our blessed Saviour was very clear in his statement of this doctrine, when conversing with that learned doctor of the law, Nicodemus ; ' Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God : ' he will have no eyes to perceive, no ears to hear, no heart

to understand the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel dispensation ; nor will he ever experience the joys of God's kingdom above, unless he be regenerate ; born of water and of the Spirit." Ibid. p. 120.

" We came into this world the sinful children of a fallen disobedient parent. By the offence of one, and that one our forefather Adam, judgment came upon all men to condemnation : we are all born in sin, the children of wrath ; but we are not shut up under condemnation : there is a way of becoming the children of God : this change must be brought about by the Holy Spirit of God. The waters of baptism are a sign of this regeneration, or the new birth." Ibid. p. 262.

We do not find any thing more specific as to the *peculiar* efficacy of the rite of baptism in Mr. Beachcroft's pages. But Mr. White has a sermon expressly on the subject ; and indeed may be considered as more detailed and precise in his enunciation of all the several doctrines of the Christian faith. He has given, in his valuable volume of Sermons, what we cannot but highly approve of, discourses on the specific " mysteries " of our holy religion, as embodied in the services of our church on her more remarkable sacred festivals and fasts.* From these, as well as from his Sermon on the Sacrament of Baptism, our readers will doubtless be pleased and edified with the following extracts, containing clear and strong enunciations of important doctrines. In his third sermon, " On the Duty of confessing our Sins," preached on St. John the Evangelist's day, from 1 John i. 9, 10, we have the following delineation of the nature of sin :—

" This then is the nature of sin : it is opposition to, or want of conformity with, the revealed will of God : in the words of the Apostle, ' sin is the transgression of the law.' The law of God

* In Mr. Beachcroft's second volume we observe, it is true, three sermons respectively appropriated to Christmas-day, Good Friday, and Easter-day ; but the second only of these embraces the doctrine of the day.

* See Homily on Christmas Day.

requires that we should consecrate ourselves without reserve to his service. It demands that we should love him with supreme affection; that we should trust in him with entire dependence; that we should yield him perfect, cheerful, and unremitted obedience. It requires also that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. Whatsoever then is inconsistent with entire devotedness to God; whatsoever is in any degree impure, unjust, untrue; whatsoever is incompatible with the most enlarged benevolence towards man, is denounced as sin, by that holy law which declares to us the will of the Most High. That law is, like himself, unchangeable; and, as he observes, so does it take cognizance of the most secret thoughts and intentions of the heart. Often, therefore, when no evil is apparent to human eyes, there is much seen by Him who knoweth all things. The evil of sin is to be judged of, not according to the low conceptions of our blinded understanding, but according to the estimate formed of it by God, who perhaps alone fully knows its nature and tendency." White, pp. 42, 43.

Mr. White afterwards well illustrates "the commandment coming," and consequently "sin reviving," and the sinner "dying," (Rom. vii.) by the admission of a ray of sunshine into a darkened room, which discovers the dust, and other light matters floating in the air, till then unperceived: "So when the entering in of the commandment giveth light to the soul, the hidden evils of the heart are detected," &c.

Again; in Sermon V. for Good Friday, "On the universal Apostacy of Mankind, and the Imputation of their Guilt to Christ," from Isaiah liii. 6, we are told—

"The text teaches the duty of simple and stedfast confidence in our Redeemer. By declaring to us, that all our iniquities are laid on him, it gives us the assurance of pardon. Only let us come to him as the devoted scape-goat, and laying, as it were, by faith, our hands upon his head, confess our transgressions, and trust to him to bear them away. It is by faith only that we obtain the benefits of his atonement. 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was the Son of Man lifted up;

that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Let us then beware lest we neglect this great salvation. Having had the Son of God set forth as it were crucified before us, let us come unto him that we may obtain deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and be made partakers of his righteousness, which is unto all, and upon all, them that believe." Ibid. pp. 90, 91.

We cannot refrain from giving another lengthened extract from this sermon, as a specimen of Mr. White's powers in the pathetic and of his general eloquence, both which, we think, are considerable.

"On him, therefore, was laid the iniquity of us all. 'He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' Christ, the spotless Lamb of God, was appointed to 'take away the sin of the world.' Though not only innocent, but in the highest degree praise-worthy, he was treated as if he had been the greatest of offenders. On his devoted head were accumulated the offences of all mankind; and O! how heavily did they press upon him! See how they have laid him prostrate on the earth, and forced from him a sweat like unto great drops of blood falling to the ground. See how they have made him sore amazed and very heavy, yea exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Consider well that it is *the Son of God* who is thus dejected: it is *He* who beseeches his Father, with tears and reiterated prayers, that if it be possible the cup of bitterness may pass from him: it is *He* who, agonizing on the cross, exclaims, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Alas! the cup cannot pass away; it must be drained to the uttermost! Thy Father's wrath must be endured, O thou compassionate Saviour! and thou must be deprived for a season of the light of his countenance, or we must endure that wrath, we must be deprived of that light, for ever and for ever. But, if we cannot mitigate thy sufferings, let us at least abhor the sins which caused them; let us, whilst we lift up our eyes to thy cross, in order to obtain the healing of our souls, mourn with unfeigned sorrow for the offences which nailed thee to it, and resolve that from henceforth we will watch with

the utmost care against transgression.— Surely, my brethren, the contemplation of a crucified Saviour ought to melt our stony hearts, ought to produce in us true repentance, ought to convince us that sin, which is in itself detestable, is in us who know what Christ has suffered for it, exceedingly sinful. Let each of us, in looking back upon his past life, regard every offence that he has committed, as a thorn implanted by him in our Saviour's temples, as a pang added to his excruciating torments; and whenever we are again tempted to transgress, let us say to ourselves, What! shall I give my Deliverer *another* wound? Shall I crucify the Son of God afresh, and once more put him to an open shame?" White, pp. 84, 85.

In Sermon VIII. "on the Ascension of Christ to the Divine Presence on our behalf," Mr. White states the doctrine of "the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers" as "written with a sun-beam on the pages of Scripture." This position he subsequently explains, and guards from abuse by saying—

"Our hopes of everlasting blessedness must depend exclusively on that righteousness which our Saviour has wrought, and which he pleads in our behalf in the presence of his Father. But, whilst we, who are the ministers of Christ, uphold this doctrine, as in faithfulness we must do, shall we countenance the error of those who teach men that there is no necessity for *personal* holiness? Shall we encourage the opinion that, provided we trust to the righteousness of Christ, we have no need to be scrupulous in practising righteousness ourselves, and endeavouring to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless? God forbid that any of us should support such detestable opinions. No, my brethren: the same blessed book which teaches us to say, 'In the Lord have I righteousness and strength,' teaches us also that 'without holiness no man shall see him;' teaches us that to those who are regardless of the Divine precepts Christ will say, 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' There is, indeed, 'no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus:' but, be it remembered, the description given of them is, that they 'walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' If any man have not the Spirit of

Christ (let him say what he will about his faith), he is none of his.' 'Faith without works is dead, being alone;' and most certainly a dead faith can never avail for our justification before God. Thus much I have thought it needful to say, by way of guard to a doctrine on which the text naturally led me to speak, a doctrine which some, in every age, have been but too ready to abuse; and, of which, the *abuse* is dangerous, in proportion as the *right use* is excellent. Let it then, on no account, be forgotten, that they only must hope to be accepted to everlasting happiness through the imputed righteousness of Christ, who are spiritually united to him, and shew the reality of that union by their resemblance of his holy character." Ibid. pp. 143—145.

In Sermon XI. on the Sacrament of Baptism, from 1 Pet. iii. 21, Mr. White gives a very plain and manly avowal of his sentiments on this much-controverted point; and seems to us to take ground, equally rational, churchman-like, and scriptural. He considers baptism as a figurative representation of an inward and spiritual grace; as a mean of salvation; and as an ordinance, the efficacy of which, under the Divine blessing, depends on the right dispositions of those who receive it. We must content ourselves, if not the reader, by two quotations from the second of these heads, which, we apprehend, will put him in possession of the views contained in the sermon. The first describes the Apostle's views of the benefits of baptism.

"He says, 'Baptism doth now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' It must be, then, by making us partakers of his resurrection, which seals to believers all the blessings of his covenant. Christ was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. By baptism we are admitted into the church which is his body, and being planted together in the likeness of his death, have the hope that we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. The church into which we are thus admitted is to us what the ark was to Noah and his family. Whilst we continue in it we are in a state of salva-

tion. We are separated from the world of the ungodly, we are released from the guilt of original sin, and grafted into the mystical body of Christ in which his Spirit dwells, and to which his promises are given. We are entitled to all the means of grace, and, if we fulfil our baptismal engagement, shall most certainly be accepted as members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. Such are the privileges to which the sacred ordinance of baptism admits *all* who are partakers of it." White, pp. 195, 196.

To the question immediately following, "But are they also inwardly sanctified as the necessary consequence of their baptism?" Mr. White answers by shewing, that even the ancient fathers, St. Austin and Chrysostom, though upholding the mystery to a very high degree, yet admitted that many who were outwardly baptized where not baptized vitally and spiritually, by the Holy Ghost. After which, by a forcible appeal to common sense, he proceeds:—

"If then we see any persons who have been baptized, habitually minding the things of the flesh, and neglecting the things of the Spirit, how can we say that they are born of the Spirit? Again, the Apostle says, 'Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, *if so be* that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if *any man* have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and if *Christ be in you*, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.' Let it be remembered that St. Paul is writing to baptized persons, to professing Christians, but he speaks of it as doubtful whether they had the Spirit of Christ, and makes the decision of the question rest upon their being dead to sin, and alive unto righteousness."—White, pp. 199, 200.

We are persuaded, that but for the unguarded positions of Dr. Mant, brought forward, *malâ ave*, and now, as it appears, universally deserted in *their legitimate extent*, both by friend and foe, most of the contending parties would have cordially acquiesced with Mr. White and his authorities

(amongst which he places Bishop Burnet very high) in the above statement on this litigated question.

We have hitherto pointed out what we believe to be strong features of similarity in our two authors; and which extend, for the most part, not only to their principal doctrinal tenets, but also to the moderation and sobriety with which they urge them. We may congratulate our readers upon the appearance of these volumes, amongst many other late productions, in which the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel are constantly and carefully maintained in full prominence, without being mixed with unhallowed and unsuccessful attempts to settle those more difficult and "secret things," which in an especial manner "belong unto the Lord our God." Such sermons satisfactorily prove to our minds the amplitude of the Gospel claims upon each man's peculiar love and obedience, even when placed upon a broader basis than many excellent men are willing to allow.*

On the other hand they discountenance the wholly unchristian language of those who fail in habitually making a distinct and personal application of the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, considering them as *sufficiently* re-

* We are not quite sure whether such expressions as "Christ not having shed his blood at an uncertainty," and some two or three others which occur in Mr. Beachcroft's volumes, may not mark a considerable difference between himself and his fellow-preacher, on some very important articles of the Christian faith. That in such profound and mysterious questions as those involved in Mr. Beachcroft's words just quoted, all men should exactly *think* alike, is more than can be demanded. That preachers should, as much as possible, avoid inconsistent statements on such subjects, is, however, greatly desirable. Mr. Beachcroft is, doubtless, fully aware that many different senses may be put upon an expression, to which all would, in their own sense, subscribe *ex animo*—that *Christ did not shed his blood at an uncertainty*.

cognised and understood by all, and needing only to take their turn with other subjects of general instruction. The recurrence to "Jesus Christ and him crucified," will, we are persuaded, be incessantly observed in those "to whom he is precious." His name will form a characteristic mark in the language of his true ministers. It will be not only as the "ointment poured out" on their richest stores, but as the one indispensable ingredient entering into the composition of their daily provision.

We must now proceed to suggest certain points of *difference* in the sermons before us; which may lead us to a few more extended remarks on two modes of pulpit instruction in some respects very dissimilar, and executed, we must confess, with very unequal merit in the two cases before us.—Mr. Beachcroft, we think, has chosen by far the more questionable one; and being as yet a somewhat inexperienced writer, addressing himself to a country congregation, has, we think, hazarded rather too much in offering *two* volumes as his first demand on public notice. We shall confine ourselves principally to the former, of which we shall give the several subjects of the sermons, followed by those of Mr. White's single volume. The very selection and order, in both cases, may be considered as somewhat marking the respective characters of the two preachers.

Mr. Beachcroft's first vol. contains: Sermon 1. The request of the two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus. 2. The Efficacy of touching the Hem of Christ's Garment. 3. Balaam and Balak. 4. The Master's Call. 5. The Sabbath Reverenced. 6. The Consequence of Sleeping during Public Worship. 7. The constraining Efficacy of the Love of Christ. 8. Enoch's Removal. 9. The faithful Abraham. 10. Esau and Jacob. 11. Our Brother a Mediator. 12. Jacob's

going down to Egypt a Figure of Death. 13. The People of God tried and humbled. 14. The Old Prophet and the Man of God. 15. The Obedience of the Rechabites. 16. Redemption through the Blood of Christ. 17. The Judgment of the Wicked Servant. 18. The Christian Temper. 19. Man's Work and Labour. 20. Exhortation to Godliness.

Mr. White's volume contains as follows:—1. The Cause and the Cure of Human Wretchedness explained. 2. Preparation for the Advent of Christ. 3. On the Duty of Confessing our Sins. 4. The Purpose for which Christ came into the World. 5. On the universal Apostacy of Mankind, and the Imputation of their guilt to Christ. 6. On the Connection between the Priestly Office and the Sufferings of Christ. 7. Christ the Author of Eternal Salvation to all them that obey him. 8. The Ascension of Christ in our behalf. 9. The Holy Spirit promised to the Church. 10. On the Athanasian Creed. 11. On the Sacrament of Baptism. 12. On the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. 13. Christ the Light of the World. 14. On the Unchangeableness of Christ. 15. On the Shamefulness and Unprofitableness of Sin. 16. Exhortation to Holiness. 17. The Same. 18. Holiness enforced from the Promises of God. 19. Hope in God the Antidote for Dejection of Spirit. 20. On the Ruin and the Recovery of the Creation. 21. The Study of Peace and mutual Edification recommended. 22. On Brotherly Love and Unity. 23. On Religious Joy. 24. On Family Worship.

It will easily be perceived from this general catalogue, that Mr. Beachcroft's collection is of a much more undefined and miscellaneous character than that of Mr. White. His title of "Plain Scriptural Sermons," might have led us to expect this: and we think, under proper regulation, every enlarged plan

of scriptural instruction ought to be miscellaneous. We wish to see the most extended possible use made of the sacred volume. We consider "all Scripture" as "given by inspiration of God;" and as "profitable" not only "for doctrine," in its statements, but "for reproof," in its exposure of the corrupt principles and practices of fallen man; "correction," in its strong and authoritative sanctions; "instruction in righteousness," in its multitude of practical principles, and corresponding cases, applicable to every possible shade of conduct and varying cast of character. Every point in this extensive field should, we think, be occupied, in turn, by the wise husbandman. Nor should we have been sorry to have perceived in the pages of Mr. White a more abundant use of resources, which, we are persuaded, he would know how to use to the best advantage. The general richness and fullness of his views might have gained considerable improvement from an ampler variety of scriptural illustration. But in commending the more copious use attempted by Mr. Beachcroft of the sources of inspiration, we are constrained to add many remarks, upon his execution of the plan, of a qualifying nature.

Mr. Beachcroft has, in fact, chosen that very questionable style of commenting on Scripture, which has been the fashion of fanciful and ingenious men of all ages, but against which the authority of the best and most judicious theologians of modern times runs very high. It consists in drawing out the words and expressions of Scripture beyond their true and legitimate bearing; and this either in the way of direct and authoritative interpretation, or in the still more vague and indefinite mode of arbitrary accommodation. That this practice was adopted by the early fathers of the Christian Church, is sufficiently known; and traces of it will be found in every

Christ. Observ. No. 185.

writer from the apostolic age down to the prince of reasoners, as well as quibblers, the great St. Austin. That the same practice was bequeathed, as a precious relic, to the earlier fathers of the reformation, is equally clear; and from them it has been derived, through the Puritan writers to our modern Hutchinsonians, and a multitude of other less steady sects; and has been partially favoured in practice by divines as respectable as Jones, Horne, and Horsley himself. How far, however, Mr. Beachcroft has even outrun many of his predecessors, we think, will appear best from a specimen or two of his favourite mode of interpretation.

In his very first sermon on the request of the two disciples going to Emmaus; "Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent;" he tells us, that these words may, "*without any forced interpretation,*" be applied to a request for protection from the hand of God during the darkness of the night; for his presence in these latter days, "the evening of the world;" and more especially, in the latter days of weakness and old age. Again; the fourth sermon, which describes "the Master's call" at the hour of instruction, of death, and of judgment, is founded upon the "call" by which Martha summons Mary to attend upon "the Master" on his coming into the house, before he raised Lazarus.*

* We must also incidentally mention here the great inconvenience often incurred by Mr. Beachcroft in his verbose and tedious mode of announcing the heads of his sermons. For instance: "Let me shew you," he remarks,

"III. That when thy body shall have returned to the dust, from whence it was taken; when it shall have slept as did the body of Lazarus in the grave; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the Master will come again to judge the world, and will call for thee. Thou must obey the summons of death and judgment; happy then will it be for thee, if thou shalt have obeyed the call of grace on

Further : in Sermon VI. on "the Consequence of Sleeping during Public Worship," (which, indeed, though fit to be incidentally mentioned, yet must have already appeared to our readers to be somewhat unworthy a place by itself, as the subject for a sermon,) the practice is made to acquire new importance, "by way of application," in shewing from the fall of Eutychus out of the chamber window, that "in a spiritual sense, there *is* life in some young persons who *seemed* to fall from their *steadfastness* ; and that when they are desirous to return to the path of duty, their parents and friends, who watch over their best interests, will be 'not a little comforted.' " The further application of St. Paul's advice made by our preacher—"trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him"—to the case of the reviving penitent, might be exceedingly injurious, should it lead to any remission of anxious care, or serious admonition upon the first discovery of hopeful symptoms in a returning prodigal.

Again: Mr. Beachcroft had very prettily said, in the opening of Sermon III. on Balaam, that, "as some of the most beautiful flowers in nature diffuse the sweetest smell, so do many of the most interesting narratives in the Sacred Volume convey the highest instruction. The outward beauty of the flower may be seen at a distance, but its grateful scent can only be perceived by a nearer approach to it." To which he adds a sentiment, which he repeats more clearly in the introduction to Sermon X. on Esau and Jacob, that "many Scripture histories appear at first sight stumbling

earth : 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death shall have no power.' " p. 59.

But for the frequent recurrence of such *heads of discourse*, we should have thought this detailed method adopted here to cover the improbability of the present application of the text.

blocks ;" "but to the humble inquirer after truth,...to the believer who confesses the whole plan of creation, redemption, and sanctification, to be a mystery understood so far only as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit of God ; to the man who is willing to be instructed, the purpose of the Almighty may be seen so far, as it is good for man to be made acquainted with it." To exemplify this observation, he gives, in the latter sermon, the apostolical interpretation in Rom. ix. of the whole transaction respecting Jacob and Esau, and speak in a very proper and guarded manner on the selection made by God between those two sons of Rebekah. This, however, not explaining, or at all palliating, the deceit of Rebekah, Mr. Beachcroft makes a supposition of his own, that Rebekah had failed to acquaint Isaac with the prophecy which *she* had received before the birth of the children ; and was by consequence driven to that hasty expedient, as the only means left her for repairing her negligence. Instances are then referred to of "persons, who *from* neglecting the commands of God have been made the instruments to effect his purpose:" and the whole concludes with an application grounded on the "profitableness of Scripture, for doctrine, reproof, [correction,] instruction in righteousness ; which leads to the "reproof" of Rebekah's and Jacob's sin, and the "instruction" contained in the two following paragraphs.

"III. This subject is profitable for *instruction in righteousness*. How, it may be asked, shall we be able to distinguish the hypocrite from the real servant of God ? Exactly as Isaac had reason to suspect, though he was too blind to discover the artifice of his son Jacob, by the words of his lips contradicting the evidence of his hands. 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.' We are all liable to be deceived by false professors, for the tongue does not always speak the language of the heart ; but it is better to be too credulous than to harden our heart

against conviction. In matters of a religious nature, let us not be faithless, but believing.

"Lastly, Jacob found admittance to his father, and obtained his blessing, by another expedient—by putting on the goodly raiment of his elder brother Esau. Thus, if we hope to gain the favour of our Heavenly Father, and to be received into his presence, we must put on the best robe, the robe of righteousness, the goodly raiment of our Elder Brother. We must be clothed with his spotless covering, or we shall never find the blessing. Jacob moreover knew the value of that birthright which Esau despised." Beachcroft, vol. I. pp. 162, 163.

Now, without inquiring whether the individual statements of this sermon, which have some peculiar infelicities in them, are considered by their author (as we are persuaded they are not,) to be fit specimens of the "spiritual" instruction vouchsafed by "the Holy Spirit" to "the humble inquirer," from the pages of Scripture;—without proceeding to other sermons of a like nature with those now quoted, such as that on "Jacob's going down to Egypt, a Figure of Death," and that on "our Brother [Benjamin] a Mediator;"—without asking how far Bishop Hall, in his *Contemplations*, (a very favourite work with our author,) may have sanctioned one analogy, or other bishops, whether of ancient or modern date, may have warranted another,—we must venture to make, somewhat at large, the following general remarks upon a certain style of scriptural illustration, altogether questionable, and of which, it must be confessed, some most unfavourable specimens, with more or less excuse, are to be found in the present sermons.

1. The style to which we allude, we wish to be distinctly understood to be that of carrying the several histories or expressions of Scripture beyond the meaning positively assigned to them by Revelation itself; or that which plain sense, and a sound judgment, might be warranted in drawing from any other writings

of a similar nature, if not inspired. Our first objection, then, to the style in question is, that it compromises the truth of Scripture, and inharmoniously, not to say unnaturally, mixes up what is fallible at least, and often doubtful, with what is perfectly pure, and essentially infallible. We believe no one will venture to assert, that the truth of the doctrine which maintains the necessity of Christ's righteousness to the soul, is proved from the crafty device of Jacob's clothing himself with the raiment of the "profane Esau," in order to deceive his father. Yet that the spotless robe of that all-perfect righteousness *is* necessary to the soul, is a doctrine infallibly and unequivocally revealed, and should therefore, we apprehend, stand clear of all fallible and frail support. And still more does the observation apply to what is evidently fictitious and erroneous. The request of the disciples to our Lord going to Emmaus, which our preacher places in the front of his volumes, clearly applies to no petition which *we* have to offer: for the very reason which they most distinctly assign to Christ for abiding with them, has no reference whatever to themselves, but only to *him*. It was "towards evening," and therefore unfit for a traveller to be exposed to the air or the danger of robbers. If they had said, "for we need thy instruction, or are delighted with thy conversation," they would perhaps have spoken their real sentiments, and set an example to us of loving godly discourse. But even then it was not the Saviour whom they thought they were inviting, but only an indifferent, though pious person. We need, and must ask, for Christ's presence at all times, by day as well as by night. The true and legitimate practical use of this passage St. Paul might have taught us in his admonition, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers," &c.—The same remark is applicable to "our Brother [Ben-

jamin] a Mediator." The fact is, Benjamin was no mediator between Joseph and his brethren; but his presence was to be a proof they were no spies. What could the act of verifying the words of Jacob's sons to Joseph, have to do with that of justifying sinners before God? Surely we might as well preach up the duty of clerical residence, as we think it was once ludicrously attempted, from the text "Abram removed his tent, and came and *dwelt* in the plain of Mamre." Or we might as fairly build an elaborate disquisition on tithes, upon the text, "Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah."

2. Another objection we have to this style, which indeed springs out of the first, is, that it invalidates the force of what *is* true; and, we should think, must produce hesitation even in the breast of the preacher himself, as we are sure it must in that of the reflecting part of his audience. How very different must be the feelings of a man of sense and reflection himself, when, warning his hearers against the danger of apostasy, from the plain and manly words of the Apostle, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" and when he is fancifully, though elegantly, enlarging on the fall of Eutychus from a chamber window! Confidence in the scriptural correctness and due illustration of his subject seems to be of vital importance to the energies of a preacher; and we cannot but think such a feeling will strongly re-act on the attention of the audience. But what confidence on either side can be awakened, when the tremendous call of the Son of man, which even now subdues the proud hearts of men, and shall hereafter rouse the sleeping dead, dwindles down to a domestic scene, and evaporates, in the plain remark of the afflicted Martha to her sister Mary, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee?"

3. We think that this practice is

formed upon very bad models, and faulty precedents. The early fathers of the Christian church were, as we have hinted before, full of these fancies. With them the four Gospels must be made to mean the four winds; and the first four, or, as St. Austin read them, the first three commandments, must be supposed to be in honour of the Trinity. It would be endless, as well as useless, to recount their extravagances. The Bible should be made to utter at least a "certain sound," and to render the manly and unalterable "words of truth and soberness." The quaint conceits of our own more immediate fathers, of such men as Bishops Andrews, Brownrigg, Hall, &c. as well as those of the reverend and learned primitive fathers just alluded to, may be far more easily accounted for, and excused, than similar improprieties in their modern successors: whilst, to extenuate still more their fault, it must be remembered that for the most part such men used the analogical method here spoken of only subordinately, amidst a boundless mass of learning and thought of a better kind. Their fanciful allusions were but a sort of stimulating condiment to a wholesome repast;—something to be pardoned for their better qualities of style.

4. But the mention of such times leads us unfortunately to worse, and by consequence to another great objection we have to this method, arising from the dangerous use made of it by certain of the Puritans, and the temptation it holds out to less excusable moderns to tread in their footsteps, by the adoption of a vague, crude, mystical, and often most mischievous system of theology. We wish entirely to acquit Mr. Beachcroft of any share whatsoever in our present observation; which acquittal, indeed, we trust our former reference to the sound, moderate, and, on the whole, judicious views of doctrine in his volumes, has rendered here unnecessary: only we should be sorry

that so respectable a name should at any time be borrowed to give a countenance to other interpreters, governed by less pure designs, or less orderly feelings. By the mode of commenting on sacred Scripture here spoken of, we are persuaded, as it has been well said on a like occasion, that "any thing may be proved from any thing." And it is to be observed, that *suggestions* from those who are looked up to by others as spiritual guides and instructors are often received by the poor and illiterate as *proofs*; and thus a mere intended prettiness on one side will, on the other, wear the aspect of an infallible assertion. It would be painful (to the honour of the present times, be it said, it would be almost superfluous) to represent more particularly the absurd interpretations of some of the pretenders to religion in the time of the civil wars, and the usurpation of Cromwell. Nor are we willing to drag to light the use of Scripture in certain journals of more modern date, which have given too much occasion "to those who desire occasion" against all religious zeal whatever.

We are, however, disposed to mention one specific instance of a minor perversion of Scripture, which is more common, though not less incorrect, than the misinterpretations to which we have just alluded. We refer to that view of the Psalms of David, which, instead of dividing them into their various classes of historical, devotional, prophetic, &c. makes them *wholly* and *exclusively* relate to Christ; and requires us to give up all the moral and practical benefits, all the rich and varied consolations, derivable from them, as private devotional compositions, for the alleged superior profit of considering them simply as delineations of the person, offices, acts, and various circumstances and feelings of the Saviour alone. In answer to such an imagination, we need do nothing more

than refer, amongst other places, to the authoritative application, by St. Peter himself, of a considerable portion of one Psalm to the private circumstances of believers.* But we shall not dwell upon the point, having merely brought it forward as a general illustration of our ideas upon this subject, in order to shew the unsafe use that unsound minds may make of such a canon of interpretation; which, however, as to the greater aberrations to which it might give rise, we are persuaded, would stand clear of all serious mischief in any writings of Mr. Beachcroft.

This author being evidently endued with a most feeling mind and glowing imagination, under the direction of a true spirit of Christian piety, seems to us exactly the person who could best spare the resources in question, on account of the ample ones he must doubtless possess of a better kind. We should by no means wish a more suppressed tone of feeling to appear in his sermons; for ardent feeling, under proper regulation, must ever constitute, we apprehend, a most attractive feature in pastoral instruction. The following passage we have marked as an engaging specimen of pathetic eloquence, and almost without any assistance from the very figure on which the sermon is founded.

"A life of sound religious principle has its joys. It is not that cold, dreary, inanimate tract of country which it is so often described to be. Let the picture be drawn with candour and impartiality, and amidst a few fleeting clouds, there will be much sun-shine to gild the scenery. The evening, more particularly, of a religious life, must ever be painted in glowing colours. And if the life of a real Christian could be analysed, it would be found to contain more particles of satisfaction than the life of any other man. But make, I entreat you, the experiment for yourselves, and you will find that the 'ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' And if they be so in this world, what joys

* 1 Pet. iii. 10—12. See also Heb. xiii. 6.

will they not lead you to in the world to come! There, every cloud will be dispelled, every mist dispersed; the veil will be drawn aside; we shall no longer see through a glass darkly; but shall see God face to face. We shall rest from our labours; all tears will be wiped from all faces; and nothing will be heard but thanksgiving and the voice of melody. Then, we shall look back upon the many trials, temptations, and vicissitudes of this life, as the Israelites, when arrived in the earthly Canaan, looked back upon the bondage of Egypt, the terrors of the Wilderness, and the passage of the Red Sea. We shall commune together of those things which have happened. 'Did not our hearts burn within us, while our great Leader, the Captain of our salvation, talked with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?' Did not we then anticipate that which we now actually enjoy? Blessed for ever be God the Father, who hath given us this glorious inheritance! For ever blessed be God the Son, who hath purchased it with his own blood! Blessed through all eternity be God the Holy Ghost, who hath sanctified us, and made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light! To whom, three Persons and one God, be all honour and glory for ever and ever! Amen." Beachcroft, vol. I. pp. 18, 19.

Much of vigorous rapidity of thought appears in the following extract from the sermon upon "The faithful Abraham."

"Pray then, that [the word of God] may be sent with power to your souls; pray that it may awaken, convince, convert, regulate, guide, comfort, satisfy, and preserve your souls unto life eternal: let it be written upon the tablet of your memory, 'The Lord can provide.' He who provided the ram caught in the thicket; he who provided on the same mountain a sacrifice for our sins; he who orders all things according to the counsel of his own will; whose providence is so particular, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without his permission; he can provide for you; he can set the bounds of your habitation; he can provide friends, advisers, counsellors; he can ordain crosses, trials, disappointments; he can bestow comforts, graces, encouragements; he can direct every thing for your eternal good. If Christ Jesus be yours, all the promises are yours; in him they are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God the Father. Be not then faithless, but believing; look to the rock from whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye

were digged; trust ye in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Ibid. pp. 147, 148.

We are no friends to too great a *conglomeration* of scripture expressions; as even diamonds may be too richly studded on a royal robe: though to a mind well acquainted with the best of books we can conceive the temptation involuntarily to display its riches on all occasions. Mr. Beachcroft seems to us, from his long practised habits of this kind, scarcely to know exactly when he is quoting Scripture; which accounts for much irregularity in his use of the artificial distinction of inverted commas. For instance, we have the two following sentences:—

"'He shall come, and the heavens shall declare his righteousness, for God is Judge alone.' Lo! he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him."

We have no means of judging why the first sentence appears as a quotation, the second not so; more particularly since, on consulting the sacred text itself, we find that, of the two, the latter verse more particularly requires the artificial marks we have mentioned. We think too that we perceive much appearance of haste in many detached passages, whether referring to Scripture or not: such as where in proof of "the sad spirit prevailing in St. Paul's time amongst many even *professing the Christian name*," the picture drawn in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, manifestly of *non-professors*, is adduced as "too dreadful to dwell upon."

In short, we hope we shall not be considered as stepping out of our sphere by generally advising our author, in any future publication, to bring his reasoning powers into fuller exercise, and lay rather a stricter restraint on the fervour of his ardent imagination. We should have been happy to have discovered more of important and

regular discussion in his sermons suited to this *discussing* age, and at least an habitual endeavour strictly to adhere to the particular subject or head he undertakes to consider. A single paragraph not uncommonly with him embraces many subjects. In short, we should recommend the close and attentive study of the most approved models: and this, not so much for doctrine, in which he is generally sound and judicious, as for composition. For this, as a study, the sermons of Clarke and Sherlock might be read with the greatest profit, and are, indeed, master pieces in the way of close and logical reasoning: those of the latter have occasionally great eloquence and pathos. To form a proper style of divinity, applicable alike to the city and the village, the palace or the cottage, we should point out Beveridge, with the words of the Roman in our mouth,

Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.

Although Mr. Beachcroft "is not aware that he has intentionally borrowed a single idea from any favourite writer; yet he gives us much reason, even from his own occasional references, as well as the variety of his matter, to infer that he has been unawares indebted to many valuable stores, ancient and modern: and fully as we agree with him that "much reading will beget an occasional similarity of thought and expression," we are strongly convinced also, that the above writers, in conjunction, would tend to form a much purer and safer style of pulpit instruction, than even the pious and playful Bishop Hall. Perhaps, however, the unrivalled sweetness and richness of Leighton's page, in his Commentary on St. Peter, might afford a model at once safe and more congenial than any yet mentioned to Mr. Beachcroft's amiable mind.

If to the style of Mr. White, who must excuse our late return and less extended attention to his pages, we

must attribute less of sensibility and originality than to that chosen by Mr. Beachcroft, we cannot fail to perceive in it marks of a more mature judgment, and of a faithful adherence to what, in our minds, appear the best and purest models. He aims at little that is new in doctrine or in illustration. His plan embraces a judicious mixture of lucid statement, calm discussion, and grave exhortation, clothed uniformly in smooth and unaffected, often in elegant and copious, diction. He frequently rises to the pitch of energy and feeling, if not of a higher or more commanding eloquence. We are not sure that the point of a sentence is not sometimes unduly sacrificed to its roundness, or the fulness of a paragraph to its just and well-poised proportions. But we are quite sure, that the audience of Welbeck Chapel, whether in hearing or reading such admonitions as abound in the three admirable sermons on Christian holiness, will have no excuse for disobedience; and "he that is unholy will be unholy still," under the most powerful human means of grace, who should obstinately continue such under such accents as those of the following appropriate address.

"There is yet another class of persons who need to be reminded of the necessity of holiness, and who have not the excuse either of occupation or ignorance to allege. I mean the gay and fashionable, who spend their time in one unceasing round of vanities, and never pause for a moment to think whether their course of life is pleasing in the sight of God. Yet would they deem it highly uncharitable to deny them the name of Christians, or to compare them to the heedless insect which flutters round the flame, and cannot be driven away, till at last it is caught by it and consumed. How awful is it to see human beings—beings made for immortality—beings possessing, in many instances, shining qualities and great cultivation, who yet go on from day to day, as if their only concern was to get to the end of life, without perceiving their progress towards it, living as if there were no hereafter; living, as the Apostle expresses it, without God in the world! O that he would graciously enable the voice

of truth to penetrate for once into their hearts; that some at least of these careless ones might have their attention arrested, and be persuaded to consider for what they were made and whither they are going! Turn not a deaf ear, I beseech you, to the voice of instruction. Do not let the enemy of your souls persuade you that religion is a foe to cheerfulness, that you will be less happy for making God your friend; that your present hours will be clouded by the certainty of possessing eternal and unchangeable felicity. Neither let him persuade you that you are safe, because you may not be grossly sinful; that amiable tempers and engaging manners can supply the place of sanctity of heart, or that God will be satisfied with any thing less than the consecration of your souls to his service. Let me appeal to your consciences, whether you believe the Scriptures to be the word of God? If you do not believe them, why do you mock him by attending on his ordinances? Why do you call yourselves the disciples of his Son? If you do believe them, to what part will you refer for a vindication of your conduct? To what part rather will you refer and not find yourselves condemned? Do you not read, not only that the wicked shall be turned into hell, but also all they that *forget* God? Is not a wo denounced against those who have 'the harp and viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine in their feasts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands?' Does not our Lord inculcate on his disciples poverty of spirit, sorrow for sin, purity of heart, renunciation of the world? Does he not teach them to aim at being *perfect*, even as their Father which is in heaven is perfect? Do not his Apostles condemn those who are 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God?' Do they not say, 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth? Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him?' Such undoubtedly is their language: you must therefore take your choice. You must be holy, or you must renounce the name of Christians; at least you must renounce the promises and hopes of Christianity.

"But perhaps, whilst I am insisting on the necessity of holiness, some will accuse me of corrupting the Gospel, and teaching men to seek for the blessings of another life by works and not by faith. God forbid that I should be guilty of so gross an error. No; it must always be contended that we

are justified by faith without the deeds of the law, that our own holiness will not suffice; that our hope must rest altogether on the atonement and righteousness of Christ. Still let it be remembered, that, whom God justifies, them he also sanctifies. True faith is known by its fruits. Its constant tendency is to produce holiness of heart and life; and when they do not appear, there is too much reason to conclude that a man has not faith, and therefore that he is not justified." White, pp. 314—317.

We had marked for notice and commendation as one of the best in the volume, and exhibiting very considerable clearness of criticism, with much strength and warmth of appeal, a sermon towards the latter end, on the *Ruin and Recovery of the Creation*, from the text, as Mr. White proposes to read it, "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God (for the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected it); in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Rom. viii. 19—21. His delineation, also, in a following sermon, on *Brotherly Love and Unity*, of "a community of which all the members were influenced by the principles of true Christianity," we should have been glad to extract, and to compare with a very fine passage in Bishop Butler's *Analogy* to the same effect. But we must content ourselves with the present mention of them; and, retracing our steps through the volume over many little flowery tracts we had marked for observation, we shall conclude with an extract from a sermon on the *Athanasian Creed*, containing an important though not novel view of that creed, to which we think it our duty to draw the attention of our readers.

"Let me, however, persuade you to examine. You will then find, that it is

not the reception of the form of words used in this creed; but the belief of the Catholic faith which is represented as necessary to salvation. 'Whoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith.' Again, it is not the objecting to the mode of expression here employed, but the corruption of the Catholic faith, which is asserted to expose a man to the danger of condemnation. 'Which faith (it is said) except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.' Then follows a statement of the Catholic faith, concerning the Persons of the Godhead; after which it is added, 'So that in all things, as is aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.' Now this clause is by no means to be considered as extending to all which preceded, but merely to the assertion, that, 'in all things the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.'" White, p. 180.

Though it is sufficiently clear that no space is left us for any concluding observations on what we have endeavoured to make a candid, and we hope not useless, examination of two different styles of pulpit instruction; we may be, perhaps, excused for offering, in conclusion, to our clerical readers one short suggestion founded on the foregoing review,—namely, that we apprehend no very great difference is necessarily called for in the style of ordinary practical instruction, from the mere circumstance of the congregation to whom it is addressed. That "the poor want principles, and the rich want practice," though a saying, we believe, of the eminent Secker, yet is one of which we could never fully appreciate the force. Both classes are equally, by nature, averse to the humbling doctrines and self-denying precepts of the Cross of Christ; and whilst, for any thing we can see, the poor are as immoral as the rich, and often much more grossly so, we cannot generally discover in the rich, either from their education or their subsequent study, at all clearer views of the doctrines of the Bible and the method

Christ. Observ. No. 185.

of salvation through Christ, than in the poor. It has *also* been observed with much more justice, according to our opinion, that, "if the poor are more unlearned than the rich, they are not more foolish;" and we are on the whole much inclined to believe, that, with the exception of a few hard words and learned allusions, which had better always be dispensed with in the pulpit, both the poor and the rich will be found generally and pretty equally benefited by the same sermon; requiring the same statements, interested by the same illustrations (*local* illustrations excepted), and warned by the same appeals. Perhaps, as a general rule, it might be safely prescribed to preachers to adapt themselves to the *lowest*, we do not *quite* say the *youngest*, of their audience; leaving it to his discretion and good taste to offend neither against the rules of correct speech nor orderly writing. If this were adopted, what would remain to make any vast difference between the congregation of Welbeck Chapel and the villagers of Blunham? And in this case it might be whispered to the instructors of both; on the one side, to venture a little more into the path of easy and familiar scriptural exposition; and, on the other side, to adopt rather a severer canon both of argument and illustration. We should wish neither species of preacher wholly to forego his own peculiar turn of thought and sentiment, and to merge into the other. Both may, with proper discipline, and God's blessing, render eminent services to the Church of Christ; as both may diminish their usefulness by mismanagement. Perhaps neither will feel himself aggrieved, if we conclude by referring them, and our readers in general, to the now long-tried and justly-approved compositions of the able and pious Mr. Cooper, as embracing, in their best exhibition and truest exercise, the leading characteristics of both.

Sermons. By W. N. DARNELL, B. D., Prebendary of Durham, Vicar of Stockton upon Tees and Lastingham, and Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of Northumberland. London: Rivingtons. 1816. pp. xii. and 382.

THIS volume consists of eighteen sermons on very miscellaneous subjects, some of them merely occasional, and none of them on any of the great and discriminating doctrines of the Gospel. Indeed, the author seems to entertain an aversion for any systematic discussion of those doctrines, grounded, as we presume, on his manifest preference for what he considers to be a more practical view of religion. Yet we cannot but lament, that in the course of eighteen sermons he should not have gone at some length into an exposition of his sentiments upon any of these momentous truths; and the more so, because he has seen fit to examine some other principles philosophically, such as the principle of self-love and the quality of friendship; because he has expressly devoted one of his sermons to a consideration of "the duty of inculcating the motives to virtue recommended in the Gospel, in preference to other motives;" and because his opinions on the nature and influence of those motives, whenever they appear, which we regret to say is seldom, seem, upon the whole, to be neither incorrect nor unscriptural.

That our readers may have an opportunity of judging what are Mr. Darnell's sentiments on some of the most important doctrines of Divine Revelation, we subjoin the following extracts.

"They who have not the 'love of God shed abroad in their hearts,' must be very imperfect judges of the manner in which that love may be matured in another world: they have had no experience of the feelings, from the existence of which they may be enabled to form a rational conjecture, of

the infinite improvement of which they are capable, without losing their original character. I do not say, that men of this description cannot reason upon the subject, without such impressions; but that, unless they allow the necessity of the love of God being a strong, operating, principle in this life, they can never understand how it may become the business and delight of immortal spirits to praise God eternally.

"But it must not be supposed, that the truth of this argument rests entirely upon conjectural reasoning. However unfavourable to our view of the question the speculations of individuals may be, their coldness is far from being decisive on this matter. Indeed, I do not understand how they can make up their minds upon it, without taking into the account, that others may do and feel, what they have never done nor felt. The Scriptures tell us, that we may have 'access to God'—these are no idle words. The Almighty promises 'to give him that is athirst of the fountain'—this is no vain and superfluous promise. And accordingly we find, that there are some who languish for want of that which God has bountifully declared that he will supply. You may hear the Psalmist exclaim, 'My soul is athirst for God!' And again, after his prayers had been heard, he says, 'In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, thy comforts have refreshed my soul.' It is, certainly, no common feeling of gratitude and affection, which causes him to break out into these words; 'Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy Name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities: who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness.' We need not doubt, that the man whose devotion is so glowing, whose praise is so copious, is ready to 'enter into the courts of the Lord's house:' that he is going through an apt preparation to appear before him, 'in whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore'—the best, indeed, of all preparations, for he has already discovered 'how joyful and pleasant a thing it is to be thankful.'

"It may be said that this is a singular instance; and that examples of this holy enthusiasm are rare. Possibly they may not be so rare as we imagine, for piety is far from being obtrusive. It looks upwards, but it casts not its eyes around. We have, however, no right to expect that we should possess such feelings, if we live

in the world, and regard only the things of the world; if, in looking to the changes that take place in this earthly scene, we attribute them all to second causes; if we harden our hearts against manifest proofs of Divine guardianship, offers of grace, and warnings not to continue in sin; if we lay snares for the praise and dangerous flattery of others, when we ought to be employed in praising Him who is alone deserving of homage; if we indulge dreams of vanity, when we ought to be keeping down evil passions.

"In plain terms, 'the carnal mind is at enmity with God.' A great change must be undergone, before we can aspire to the felicity reserved for the elect. Every man, therefore, who has within him the hope of that salvation, tries to 'purify himself even as God is pure.' He weans himself as much as possible from earthly things, that he may 'have his conversation in heaven.' He becomes engrossed with religion. Serious thoughts do not pass over him like a summer cloud, but they settle on his heart. This turning of the soul to God cannot be accomplished without doing violence to many of those propensities which it is our delight to indulge. It is no trifling obstacle, at the commencement of all, that we are bound to receive the blessings of Providence and the instruction of the revealed word, not as if we deserved the former, and could procure it by our own efforts; not as if we were at liberty to weigh, and examine, and amend the latter; but like 'little children,' with thankfulness, and submission, and a steadfast purpose of unremitting obedience." pp. 199—203.

"Let not then the sinner say in his heart (for this is the most dangerous of all delusions,) that, through the mercy of God, he may be admitted into heaven, though he die with a temper unsubdued and unchanged. There is no meaning in words, and no distinction between good and evil, if the 'throne of the Lamb,' and the throne of Satan, could be erected together; if the 'servants of the devil' could dwell in harmony with the 'children of God.'

"I have been endeavouring to prove to you, that without some previous training, that training which the Gospel requires, we shall be hereafter unfit to enter upon the happiness of heaven: nay, that we shall not seek after it in the way in which it ought to be sought, in consequence of undervaluing the happiness which is reserved

for us; of not apprehending what is the extent of the love of God towards us; and the manner in which it may be exhibited to saints, who have been warmed by the contemplation of it in this world. No wonder then if we fail of attaining that which is not even an object of our desires." pp. 204, 205.

"It should seem therefore to be the duty of ministers of the Gospel to enforce its peculiar motives and doctrines, and to employ all their zeal and ingenuity to prove them to be practicable in their fullest extent. For to endeavour to render Christianity as generally acceptable as possible, is by no means our duty, if it be done by enfeebling its characteristic energies, and reconciling it with the ways of the world: much less if an argument be triumphantly drawn for the truth of Christianity, in consequence of its being represented as a system accommodated to our weaknesses, and content with partial obedience. It is no slight misconception of the Gospel to suppose that it can be made to compromise with the manners of modern times, any more than with those of the Augustine age when it was first promulgated. It professes to 'regenerate' the hearts of individuals at all periods, to supply them with new principles of action, and to make them in this world the 'temples of the Holy Ghost.'

"If it is therefore of importance to be convinced that our corrupted nature gravitates perpetually to sin; it is not of less importance to be assured that we are endowed with powers which can correct these evil tendencies, and refine, and restore, our nature." pp. 43, 44.

It might be expected from the tenor of these extracts, that the motives, thus delineated and appealed to, would be made, in some shape, the ground-work of every sermon: and, indeed, they are never kept entirely out of sight. There is an amiable tone of feeling, corrected by sound sense and Christian philosophy, which while it shews those motives to be the acting principle of the author's mind, imparts a pleasing character to his style and manner, which will probably be apparent to the reader, even in those few extracts which we may soon have oc-

casion to present to him. The whole volume is evidently the produce of a well-cultivated understanding, influenced by Christian dispositions and principles, and exerting itself to direct others into the same.

But here, as impartial critics, our approbation must stop; for he who should take up this volume for the purpose of deriving that decidedly spiritual improvement which the name of "Sermons" might appear to indicate, would, we fear, be not a little disappointed in the perusal. The person and offices of the Redeemer, the work and influences of the Divine Spirit, the guilt of man, the need of an atonement, the necessity of faith in Christ, with various other most important subjects of Christian doctrine and practice, by no means meet in this volume with any thing like the attention which they imperatively demand. As a collection of respectable and pious essays, the work may be fairly applauded; but it is greatly deficient in many of those qualities and statements which ought never to be dispensed with in discourses intended for the Christian pulpit. No series of sermons can be characterized as adapted to the wants of mankind, or worthy of the house of God, which does not present to the view of the audience—and that not incidentally, occasionally, or coldly, but regularly, primarily, and most emphatically—the leading truths of the Gospel; which does not aim to convince them of their own absolute need of an atoning Saviour, and a sanctifying Spirit.

We suspect the author has been misled into that common but delusive persuasion, that the majority of those who make up the mass of professedly Christian congregations, are habitually under the influence of Christian principles; that they have a thirst for the holiness of the Gospel, and a penitential conviction of their need

of a Saviour. There is, indeed, one passage in a sermon on Christmas Day, in which the contrary opinion is announced.

"When we come to hear how Abraham and the patriarchs rejoiced to see the day of Christ; how they 'saw it, and were glad;' how the prophets exulted in the far-distant prospect; and lastly, how the glad tidings were announced to mankind by a chorus of angels; we seem to feel cause for hope, and love, and gratitude, almost before we become acquainted with the nature of those feelings. Thus it is that many external circumstances unite to give birth in us to such dispositions as this occasion demands.

"Is it meant, do you suppose, that these dispositions are to be found in all of us? On the contrary, I am persuaded that in many they may be sought for in vain. It is only asserted that we are favourably circumstanced for the production of them; and that the good effect alluded to is not unfrequently produced. But I cannot refrain also from saying, that there is reason to suspect the state of that heart which is not in unison with the character of this day. If there be any one arrived at maturity of reason, and properly instructed in religious matters, who is not now cheerful from conviction that he has much to rejoice in; it may, I fear, be presumed, either that his heart is insensible, and has not yet been opened; or that his proper feelings have been choked by vice, and blunted by indulgence in sensual pleasures." pp. 175, 176.

There may be a few others. But in general there are no considerations in these sermons addressed to the impenitent or unawakened; nor even in this very extract is there any allusion to that fearful state of unconversion, under which many of those described in it must lie, nor any instruction in regard to the means necessary to be adopted for their recovery from the error of their ways. Yet surely it cannot but occur to the author, that *their* case is worthy of as much ministerial regard and attention as that of persons whose sincerity is unquestionable, though their progress may be slow, and their dangers certain; and we can

only account for his utter silence in regard to this unhappy class of persons, by supposing that he either underrates their numbers, or imagines they are not to be generally found in the assemblies of professed Christians.

We can hardly entertain a doubt, that so enlightened a mind as Mr. Darnell's, when brought seriously to the consideration of this question, will admit, that a worldly mind may consist with religious profession; that there may be a decorous regularity of attendance on public worship, even in those who have not yet been "redeemed from their vain conversation, received by tradition from their fathers;" that many even who have no serious thoughts at all of godliness, are yet counted among those stated or casual attendants who contribute to swell the numbers of every congregation; and that consequently in the course of eighteen sermons some further notice may in charity be expected of a case which meets us in every page of the New Testament, and in every walk of life. It is as necessary to make known the way of salvation to the ignorant, the careless, and the impenitent, as of improvement to the godly; and few sermons can be considered perfect, which have not some pretension to do both.

There are, indeed, occasional expressions and passages in Mr. Darnell's volume, which induce us to imagine that we might be found to entertain opinions very different from those of the author on some of these pretermitted subjects. We should, however, have much more hope than fear in calmly discussing with him the chief doctrines of religion; judging, as we do, from the specimen before us, that we might calculate upon a dispassionate investigation, and a feeling application of scriptural truth; and where these qualities exist, we should do injustice to the cause of truth, and to that Divine instruction which is promised

to the humble inquirer, by fearing for the issue.

We will now give our readers a further view of the contents of this volume, in order that they may be enabled to estimate its merits, not merely by negative but positive description.

We have already observed, that many of the sermons are on occasional subjects. Perhaps the following remarks, taken from an assize sermon, though well suited to check one crying evil, and put to shame another, may be thought better adapted to other pages, than to those of a discourse from the pulpit. They are, indeed, expressly introduced as topics less peculiarly proper for the house of God, than some others which are brought forward in the same sermon.

"Those who are in the habits of attending courts of justice, particularly in the metropolis, often hear statements deliberately made, and solemnly assevered, by two parties, in direct contradiction to each other; while justice is left to pick out her way by chance, and the guilty go free through the machinations of their associates. Nay, what is still more deplorable, the parties so opposed are sometimes children of a tender age, armed with effrontery, and adepts in sin. What does all this bespeak? Does it not shew a want of education at a period of the world in which we pride ourselves in the liberal instruction of all ranks? I fear it proves, what is much worse, that there exists somewhere a system contrary to that which would save from destruction; that the young are trained and educated in vice. This circumstance, one would think, might silence those who hesitate about extending and completing the improved plans of education now agitated. It might prove to those who think that the poor are sufficiently instructed, that in this department there is yet much to do; inasmuch as it should appear, that we have not merely to combat the natural bias of uninformed minds, and the temptations of poverty and idleness, but also to countermine the active exertions of masters and teachers of immorality. When the vice of perjury prevails, the morals of a nation are at a low ebb. They who are guilty of it, must either be altogether uninstructed, or they must have thrown off all restraints of religion. It is only by such restraints that the heart

and the lips can be properly disciplined. If ever a court of justice should be looked upon as an arena appointed for a trial of skill, in which fraud is to be set against fraud, and immunity is to be the reward of ingenious falsehood; it will cease to answer the ends of justice, and will become, when so degraded, a place too well calculated for the shipwreck and submersion of morality. But, fill the mind with the idea of God's presence; overawe it with the idea of his hatred to duplicity; and he who takes a deliberate oath will see that his salvation is embarked in the business, and his life set upon a throw.

"Yet, however difficult it may be to obtain truth from some witnesses, it cannot be denied that others are occasionally subjected to a severer scrutiny than may seem to be either needful or delicate. It would, I am sure, be a bad compliment to the sagacity of their examiners, if we did not suppose that they were often convinced of their honesty, before they ceased to sift their testimony. It has been admitted that there is one cause which leads directly to this practice. Is that cause sufficient to justify it? No one would presume to complain that a fair liberty is used: the complaint is, that in many instances it is abused. And surely it will be allowed that it is no trifling perversion of justice, to endeavour to abash diffidence; not even to spare mockery, for the purpose of extorting from a witness expressions favourable to the cause which the advocate has undertaken to support; but it is still worse, if the effect of the ordeal be, to disparage the character, as well as to wound the feelings, of the person so exposed.

"This remonstrance is not made because the license alluded to is unmanly; nor because it tends to make the community look with less respect upon judicial processes—these considerations are for those who are justly jealous of their honourable profession. I do not even take my ground here, that it excruciates modesty; but that it tends to confound truth with falsehood; to substitute the one for the other; to discountenance simplicity—in a word, because the moral effect is pernicious.

"There is one quarter from which they who indulge themselves in these practices may be, and are, controlled with dignity and propriety; however, since the evil doers still exist, and the cruelty may be repeated, no one, I trust, will be surprised that what is a matter of general regret, should become, in this place, a subject of public reprobation." pp. 260—264.

There are some useful considerations suggested in a sermon upon occasion of a proposal for fitting up two apartments in an infirmary for the reception of patients afflicted with consumptive and glandular complaints. There is also an interesting sermon on the gratitude due for a plentiful harvest, and two others, which may be called funeral sermons. The first of them, indeed, is strictly such, in which a portrait is drawn of the Christian walk and conversation of Bryan Burrell, Esq. of Broome Park, in Northumberland. The other contains a long extract from the diary of William Cornforth Lowes, Esq. of Ridley Hall, in the same county, from which it would gratify us to transcribe some impressive passages, were we not admonished by our limits to pass forward to the sermons which have not yet been noticed.

Our author speaks highly of the benefits to be expected from the institution of evening lectures in the present circumstances of society; though in so doing he seems to lay too much stress upon the effect of mere external influences. Thus he says:

"The last point to which I wish to direct your attention, is the advantage we may probably derive from the late period of the day at which our service is performed.

"We all know how much outward circumstances tend to increase the effect of impressions, whether good or bad, upon the mind. Hence arises the value of the decent and solemn rites of our religion. We learn to form just notions of the majesty of the Supreme Being by the practice of prescribed ceremonies equally removed from irreverence and superstition; and which are rendered sacred by being appropriated to his service alone. It is natural to expect that these ceremonies should affect us more, and that their hidden virtue and intrinsic good, which they are only the instruments of conveying to us, should be imparted with surer effect, and sink deeper in our hearts, when they

are performed at those times which are most favourable to devotion. Now the early morning, and the decline of day, are assuredly those periods in which pious feelings are most apt to spring up, uncalled for, in our minds. Those who do not 'set God always before them,' are inclined to approach him then. If we do not pray at those seasons, when alone, I fear we shall never pray at all. The custom of early prayers, long since adopted by the Church, has now fallen into disuse. They are only kept up in the Universities, where the attendance is still regular; and in a few Cathedral Churches, where they are almost entirely deserted. It seems, therefore, desirable that we should take possession of a ground as yet unoccupied, and hallow the close of the Sabbath by devoting it to God's honour. The hour is not far distant, when many of this congregation will retire to rest. I think we may indulge a hope, that what they hear now, and under similar circumstances, whenever they occur, they will hear with profounder attention, and more than usual seriousness; that they will pray more fervently, and praise God more heartily. Of one thing I am certain, that, when they lay their heads upon their pillows, they will feel no slight satisfaction in recollecting that the adoration of their heavenly Father was the last public duty of the day." pp. 242—244.

Of the remaining sermons, three relate to the duties of fraternal love, respect to the aged, and attendance on the sick; on each of which topics the author evidently writes from personal observation and feeling, though we should have been glad to have seen the connection of these various disquisitions on relative duties with those higher principles, out of which we believe them to grow in the author's own mind, more fully developed to his readers. We offer the following extract, as a specimen of the whole.

"Respect for the aged is frequently associated with a moral virtue of high character and importance. They who are noted for respect to the aged, are generally not less remarkable for affection to their parents. The feeling in question seems, indeed, an emanation from filial piety, an

expansion of that more condensed and glowing sentiment. They are so nearly allied, that the one can scarcely exist without the other. In truth, there are certain associations here, probably designed by our benevolent Creator, which cause these kindred feelings to give a mutual aid and support to each other. There are some who only become acquainted with the infirmities of age, by contemplating them in the decay and gradual decline of a parent's health: hence they are led to think, how heavy these sufferings may be, in other cases, where they are aggravated by poverty or neglect. There is one instance, also, in which it procures for us a sort of new and more extended relationship, by inducing us to double our attentions to the parents of our friends. These are ties which bind society together in sober and innocent enjoyment; they shew us the fairest side of human nature—the best, though it may not be the most brilliant. There is, perhaps, no gratification more sincere, or which affects a delicate and sensible mind more deeply, than that which arises from observing the solicitude of their most intimate friends to please, or comfort, or oblige, the authors of their own being.

"Again, there are many in whom the recollection of a parent's form, or countenance, together with all the tender ideas, which may be supposed to accompany such a recollection, are often called up by the casual sight of an aged person. I should be sorry to be thought fanciful on this point, but, indeed, I am rather inclined to think, that many must have made the same observation, that there is a uniformity of feature, traced and moulded by the hand of time, which draws many countenances, essentially different in youth, to a resemblance in the decline of life. These similarities can seldom be observed without emotion: they impress a sacred character on age: they give a sudden pause to the spirits, when they are flowing cheerily along: they sustain the sentiment of filial piety, when it is in vigour; or prolong and perpetuate it, when it is beginning to lose its power from inaction.

"How strong is the appeal which the poor man makes, when, unknown to himself, he awakes such recollections! His gray hairs, or his sunken eye, or his tremulous voice, plead more powerfully for him, than his sad tale of distress. Suppose a person, struck with a resemblance of this nature, after having torn himself from his

parents, whom he has left to lament his disobedience, and to pine without support. He may have succeeded in driving from his memory the miseries he has caused them; but this, if any thing, will rouse him from his apathy, and hatch the viper of remorse in his bosom.

"Or, suppose a man about to commit a crime, and the same vision suddenly to impress itself upon his imagination;—he will falter—his hand will fail. The least that can be hoped is, that his thoughts will be forced into a new direction; and time be given, if he avail himself of it, for reason and virtue to resume their sway.

"So much for the nature of the feeling which forms the subject of our discourse. It may be sufficient to say of those who have it not, that they are frequently more presumptuous than wise; and too much occupied with themselves, to observe what is due to others. There is reason to doubt, whether they will ever be grateful to those who shall confer favours upon them, since they shew no respect or gratitude, to those to whom all the world is under obligations.

"Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten, that how good soever this feeling is in itself, and how unnatural soever it may be, to be devoid of it; yet, there is little probability of its being cherished and kept alive, without a becoming conduct on the part of those to whom it is due. Every right-judging person, will make allowances for the querulousness, and the egotism, and even for the dogmatism, of age: these are the weak points, by nature, of that period of life. But let the old beware, how they affect the indiscretions of youth. Let them not descend from their station. Let it be far from them to shew, that they are ashamed of the characteristics of age. *The glory of young men, say the Proverbs, is their strength, and the beauty of old men is the gray head.* In like manner, there are duties and employments, which are peculiarly theirs: pleasures and diversions, from which they must quietly recede. The old err greatly, when they think that they recommend themselves to the young, by imitation of their vices. There are serious thinkers almost in infancy; and severe judges of conduct even among the profligate; but, indeed, without any moral considerations, there is something in ill-timed dissipation, which creates disgust, instead of promoting sociality.

"There is another mistake into which the old are apt to fall;—an error of the present day, and not of those good times, when the relative duties of domestic life were better understood than they now seem to be. What I allude to is this:—Without stooping to imitate, or to join in, the vices of the young, they will sometimes endeavour to win their affections by indiscreet familiar intercourse. Now, it is one thing to relax austerity, another to forget decorum. The old must not expect to be loved in the first instance, and afterwards listened to as infallible oracles. They must be content to be respected first: for upon that foundation only can affection to them be reared up. I am not now speaking of the case of parents and children, where an attachment is imbibed with the first nourishment received in infancy: yet it is but too evident, that parents are often under a gross delusion, with respect to the treatment which should be adopted towards their children. They pretend to be their easy, and intimate, and confidential friends, instead of their grave and affectionate instructors. To bring this about, they labour to induce them to throw off all restraint; and some have even a foolish pride in training their children to address them in terms of undutiful and odious familiarity.

"Why, you might as well attempt to make the mountain bow to the plain, as attempt to unite the extremes of youth and age. Things forced into too close a contact, only dispart the more suddenly and widely. There are many confidences unfitted for a parent's ear; many thoughts and feelings (I allude to such as are perfectly innocent,) the communication of which forms the real bond of union amongst the young. How can they, who are upon a footing of complete equality, the playfellows of their children, and who must necessarily connive at many follies, in order to establish their new character, expect that they shall, in a moment, regain the tone of superiority; that they shall be regarded with reverence, when they rebuke, or be obeyed, when they command? Let it not be thought, that I would encourage reserve on either part. There is a province assigned to parents, in the discharge of their duties, in which they may shew both majesty and sweetness; but, if they step out of that province, they lose both the control which they have by nature, and the estimation they might have gained in the exercise of it." pp. 164—170.

The remaining sermons relate to more general subjects. They are principally four, which were preached before the university of Oxford, and two on the Christian temper, and the means which God employs to bring men to salvation. They are the first in the volume; but we have reserved them to the last, for the sake of some suggestions in one of them, which appear to be peculiarly appropriate to the present season of national difficulty. Before, however, we cite the passage to which we have just alluded, we must take permission to extract the following remarks on the influence of friends in forming the character.

"It is a common error for people to suppose that they possess a formed and decided character, which will remain unchanged in the active scenes of life, just as it may be seen to do in the incidents of a fictitious narrative. I do not mean that they flatter themselves with the idea of being invulnerable by temptation. That is greater weakness and vanity than falls to the lot of the generality of mankind: but they fancy that whatever they do, they will do with their own free-will; and that, whether they act right or wrong, they will act independently of others. This is far from being the truth. We are less the lords of ourselves, than the creatures of others. For example, there is something like accident, in the formation of friendships, which strangely alters our sentiments and habits. A man may live many years before he meets with that congenial disposition, or commanding intellect, which opens out the capacities of his soul by co-operation, or controls him by natural superiority; or, losing these advantages early, he may not recover them again, and feel all the miseries arising from weakness and indecision, without fully ascertaining the cause of them—namely, that he is left to himself.

"With respect to direct advice, however well intended, it often fails of accomplishing its object; either because they who give it cannot avoid assuming an air of authority and superior wisdom; or because those who ask, or receive it, have, for the most part, made up their minds to follow their own inclinations. But it is not always

Christ. Observ. No. 185.

entirely lost on these accounts; and there are times when it comes with double force; as, for instance, when it recurs at a distant period, strengthened and substantiated by circumstances; when the thing formerly recommended, grows out of our own experience after we had long forgotten it, and then is called up at once to our recollection, as if to confirm the decisions of our own judgment. It is then of use to have been forewarned, though we did not profit by the immediate admonition." pp. 106—108.

We must now content ourselves with the extract to which we have already alluded.

"In the pride of philosophy, or the dearth of piety, we are now too apt to refer to secondary causes, all those results which secondary causes are in any degree imagined to affect. There was a time when national calamities were believed to be Divine judgments; when solemn humiliations were something more than idle ceremonies; when, the arm of God being supposed to turn the tide of battle, prayer naturally preceded every enterprise, and praise followed every success. But the general diffusion of free opinions on religious and moral matters, has, it seems, disturbed our acquiescence in tenets which were once undisputed; and the dread of being thought ignorant or superstitious, in the midst of an enlightened age, has superseded in our hearts the fear of God. We now see in the ruin of states, no other operating cause but the weakness or perfidy of rulers; and we discover sufficient reason for the success of villany, in well-combined resources, and prompt decision.

"Nor is the case different in private life. If our secret thoughts do not altogether belie our uttered sentiments, and it is not natural that they should, we are apt to refer the treachery of friends, or the coldness of patrons, to bad fortune, rather than to the aversion of Providence; and our inability to arrest the progress of disease, to the failure of human skill, rather than to the will of that Power, in whose hands are *the issues of life and death*. In fact, it is difficult to believe that we have not a very strong influence over moral causes, when we perceive that the boundaries of science are enlarging every day by our own efforts, and that truth seems to be the never-failing result of investigation and experiment.

2 X

"Yet, though we may conjecture that the agency of God is, in such regions, withdrawn into narrower limits, or the range of our own powers extended, there are, nevertheless, certain affections and feelings which are quite beyond our control; tender places, as it were, of the mind, which shrink from the impression of a hand which is not of this world. As in them we cannot easily discover the operation of second causes, so we are here more ready to acknowledge the First Great Cause who has created the soul, and given to it the sensibility to pain," pp. 77—79.

It can hardly fail to occur to the reader of this passage, that we have in a great measure passed by the blessing of God through a season of national distress without one act of national humiliation or acknowledgment to the Almighty. This (we seriously think) could not have happened some centuries ago; and the reason of its happening now has been well pointed out by our author. A philosophising spirit has prevailed amongst us, which, while it has enlarged our acquaintance with second causes, has diminished our sense of

dependence upon the First Great Cause of all. In truth, it appears (and it is a humiliating acknowledgment) that our recognition of Providence is limited to those events which we cannot trace to any other origin; as if our knowledge of his ways could make him less our Governor, or as if the extent of our privileges could diminish his claim upon our gratitude. Whatever may be our superiority in the general diffusion or in the progressive advancement either of knowledge or of benevolence, in public acts of piety we have greatly declined from our ancestors; and we shall not think that the passage just quoted has had its fair effect upon our readers, if it does not incite them to pray to the Giver of all grace, that it will please him, in his bountiful goodness, to increase our faith, that we may regard him as the Author of all our blessings, and "in all our troubles put our whole trust and confidence in his mercy, through Jesus Christ, our only Advocate and Redeemer."

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL INTELLIGENCE, &c. &c.

GREAT BRITAIN.

PREPARING for publication:—A Descriptive Catalogue of the Geological Specimens deposited in the Museum of the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall, by Dr. J. A. Paris;—The Works of Virgil, partly original, and partly altered from Dryden and Pitt, by Mr. John King;—An Historical Display of the Effects of Physical and Moral Causes on the Character and Circumstances of Nations, by Mr. John Bigland;—A Poem, by the Right Hon. Sir Wm. Drummond, under the title of Odin;—A Key to the Old Testament, or a summary View of its several Books, by the Rev. H. Rutter;—and the Cottager's Companion, intended to instruct the Labouring Poor in the Art of Cottage Gardening, &c.; by Mr. W. Salisbury, of Sloane-street.

In the press:—Shakspeare and his

Times; including the Biography of the Poet, &c., by Dr. Drake;—The late Dr. Leyden's Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Africa;—History of Whitby, with a statistical survey of the vicinity to the distance of twenty-five miles, by the Rev. George Young;—and (by subscription) The Memoirs of the late Miss Emma Humphries of Frome, Somersetshire; with a Series of Letters to Young Ladies, and to Parents; by T. East.

The Board of Agriculture have resolved to give the following among their premiums:—To the person who shall draw up, and produce to the Board, the best Essay on the Means of employing the industrious and unoccupied Poor—the gold medal, or one hundred pounds: to be produced on or before the 1st of March, 1818.

The Aurora Borealis re-appeared, after an absence of some years, on the 8th of April. Observations were made at London, Derby, Leeds, Paris, and other places.

It was stated at the late Warwick Assizes, by the judge who presided on that occasion, that the use of Spring Guns is considered by the most eminent lawyers as illegal. He severely reprobated the cruelty of the practice, alleging that the law never intended to give any man the right of shooting another for so trivial a trespass as the cutting a stick in a hedge. A child who had been dangerously wounded by seventeen pebbles, on such an occasion, while in search of his kite, was the plaintiff, and received 120*l.* damages.

It has been ascertained, by experiment, that Grain which has begun to germinate, if used as seed, will not spring but in the proportion of one half the quantity employed; if strongly germinated, not more than a third; and if fired or moulded, not more than a fifth. In all these cases, the young shoot is feeble and unpromising. Various substances have been recommended in making bread from the flour of germinated or *malted* grain; particularly magnesia and the alkalis, which, when judiciously employed in small quantities, are found greatly to assist the operation and to improve the bread, without any injurious consequences to the human frame.

The introduction of Steam Boats into general use, has received a temporary check, by an unhappy event which lately occurred at Norwich, in an explosion, by which several lives were lost. It appears, however, that the boiler in this case was cast-iron; the valve had been criminally loaded, and the fire too much forced, for the purpose of getting a-head of a rival boat. We trust that the melancholy event will have the effect—not of impeding the progress of a useful and important national improvement—but of securing, in future, a more cautious attention to the construction of the machinery, and the prudence of the servants employed in conducting it.

Several persons in different parts of the kingdom have lately remonstrated against the unnecessary cruelty of “pegging” crabs and lobsters; which is done to prevent their injuring one another, or wounding their tormentors. Every purpose is answered by tying the claws instead of pegging them; and in Weymouth, the fishermen have been induced to adopt the more humane method, by a general resolution of the respectable inhabitants, not to

purchase any fish that are pegged. Indeed, independently of the cruelty of the practice, the fishmongers prefer the mode of tying the claws, as instances frequently occur of lobsters wounded by the peg wasting away under their sufferings, and mortification of the part often ensues. Thousands die in this manner every year. Eels, lobsters, and other animals, which suffer much in the usual modes of killing or dressing them, might be humanely despatched in a moment, by merely puncturing the brain with a sharp iron pin, invented for the purpose.

It is ascertained, by experiment, that with a proper apparatus one cask of coals will serve to distil six casks of water. A French vessel about to proceed on a voyage of discovery, is to take only water sufficient for a fortnight; and, instead of the remainder, coals, which will be but a sixth part of the tonnage. This distilled water is perfectly as good as fresh water that has been a fortnight on board.

RUSSIA.

The Emperor of Russia has issued a Rescript, in favour of the *Duchaborski*, a sect which may be called the Quakers of the Greek Church. His imperial majesty takes occasion to disclaim persecution of every kind; remarking, “The doctrine of the Redeemer, who came into the world to save sinners, cannot be spread by constraint and punishment. True faith can only take root, by the blessing of God, by conviction, instruction, mildness, and, above all, by good example.”

CHINA.

The following statistical account of China is interesting at the present moment.

Extent of the empire in	
square miles - - -	1,297,999
Number of inhabitants -	333,000,000
Revenues in pounds sterling	412,140,625

This gives 256 persons to a square mile, or two and a half acres to each person, which is full one half more in proportion than the population of England.

JAVA.

Several fine specimens of Hindu Sculpture have been recently brought from Java, consisting of figures of Siva, Ganesa, Durga, Buddha, &c. They evidence the extensive diffusion of the Hindu Mythology in the Eastern Islands, as well as the high state of civilization and scientific skill to which the natives had arrived at very remote periods of history.

LIST OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THEOLOGY.

The Advantages of Solitude: a Sermon preached at Salter's-hall Meeting-house, by the late Rev. Hugh Worthington, April 20, 1777; never before published. 1. 6d.

A Second Lay-Sermon; by S. T. Coleridge. 8vo. 5s.

A new Volume of Sermons; by Bishop Horsley. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

The Christian Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, considered and maintained on the Principles of Judaism; by the Rev. J. Oxlee. 2 vols. 8vo.

Female Scripture Biography; by F. A. Cox, A.M. 2 vols. 8vo. 2s.

Sermons, on various subjects; by the late W. Bell, D.D., prebendary of Westminster. 7s.

A Reference to Jewish Tradition, necessary to an Interpreter of the New Testament; by C. J. Bloomfield, M.A., Rector of Dunton, Bucks. 2s.

Spry's Bampton Lectures. 8vo. 10s. 6.

Steven's Discourses on the Festivals and Fasts. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

Sermons; by T. S. Jones, D.D. 10s. 6d.

Memorial of the Just; by Rev. T. Jervis.

An Assize Sermon, preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, March 6, 1817; by John Davison, A.M. 1s.

The True Test of Religion in the Soul; by the Rev. C. Simeon.

Sermons by the Rev. John Martin. 2 vols. 8vo. 24s.

Letters to a Serious and Humble Inquirer after Divine Truth; by the Rev. Edward Cooper. 12mo.

Sermons, extracted from Bishop Porteus's Lectures; by J. Baker, M.A. Rector of Stanmer-cum-Palmer, Sussex. 8vo. 9s.

Challenge to Unitarians. 8vo.

MISCELLANEOUS.

An Essay on Burns; or the Treatment of Accidents by fire: in two Parts: with a Preface; by Edward Kentish, M.D. 10s.

Algebra of the Hindoos, with Arithmetic and Mensuration: translated from the Sanscrit; by H. T. Colebrooke, Esq. 4to. 3l. 3s.

Researches concerning the Laws, Theology, Learning, Commerce, &c. of Ancient and Modern India; by L. Crauford, Esq. 2 vols. 8vo. 18s.

J. Major's Catalogue of rare, curious, and valuable Books for 1817. 8vo. 1s. 6d.

Supplement to A. B. Dulau and Co.'s Catalogue. 1s.

Ogles, Duncan, and Cochran's Catalogue for 1817. 8vo. 4s. 6d.

Memoir of the Early Life of W. Cowper, Esq.; by Himself. 8vo. 4s.

Chemical Essays. 5 vols. 15mo. 2l. 2s.

Comparative Chronology of the Classic Ages of Greece and Rome; by J. Stanton.

An Account of the Origin, Principles, Proceedings, and Results, of an Institution for Teaching Adults to read, established in Bucks and Berks in 1814. 8vo.

Correspondence between a Mother and her Daughter; by Mrs. Taylor, of Ongar.

A new General Atlas, containing distinct Maps of all the principal States and Kingdoms throughout the World, in which the European Boundaries, as settled by the Treaty of Paris and Congress of Vienna, are accurately delineated; by T. Ewing, Edinburgh. 18s.

Outlines of Geology: being the Substance of a Course of Lectures delivered in the Royal Institution, by W. Thomas Brande, Sec. R.S. F.R.S.E. Prof. Chem. R.I. &c. 8vo. 7s. 6d.

A View of the History, Literature, and Religion of the Hindoos; by the Rev. W. Ward. 2 vols. 8vo. 18s.

Papers on the Affairs of Scotland from 1702 to 1715; by George Lockhart, Esq. 2 vols. 4to. 5l. 5s.

A Translation of the St. Helena Manuscript. 8vo. 7s. 6d.

Points in Manumission, and Cases of Contested Freedom; by J. Henry, Esq. Barrister-at-Law, and late President of the Court of Criminal and Civil Justice of Demerara and Essequibo.

Cursory Remarks on a Bill now in the House of Peers, "for regulating Mad-houses;" by Geo. M. Burrows, M.D. F.L.S. &c. 4s.

Letters from Mrs. E. Carter to Mrs. Montagu, between 1755 and 1800; chiefly on literary and moral subjects. 2l. 5s.

The History of an old Pocket Bible, as related by Itself; by the Rev. Robert Cox, A.M. 3s.

Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce; by Jas. Riley, late Master and Supercargo. 4to.

A Letter of Advice to his Grandchildren; by Sir Matthew Hale. 8vo. 5s.

The Æneis; translated by Dr. Symmons. imp. 4to. 2l. 12. 6d.

An Enquiry into the Nature of Benevolence; by J. E. Bicheno, F.L.S. 8vo. 4s. 6d.

An Enquiry into the principle of Population; by J. Grahame, Esq. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation; by David Ricardo, Esq. 14s.

James's Journal of a Tour in Germany, Sweden, Russia, Poland, &c., during the years 1813-14, 2 vols. 17. 10s.

A Narrative of the Briton's Voyage to Pitcairn's Island; by Lieut. Shilliber, 8vo. with sixteen etchings. 7s. 6d.

Letters from the Highlands; by Miss Spence. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

Germanicus, Tragédie en cinq Actes et en Vers, par A. V. Arnault. 8vo. 3s.

A Translation of the above in blank Verse; by George Bernel. 8vo. 3s. 6d.

A Description of the Pictures in the Royal Museum at the Louvre, with Biographical Notices of the different Painters: to which is added, a Description of the Museum of Sculpture, in the Lower Gallery. 18mo. 3s.

Major Barnes's Tour through St. Helena. 12mo. 5s.

Narrative of a Voyage to Hudson's Bay; by Lieut. Edward Chappell, R. N.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

From an account laid on the table of the House of Commons of the number and value of books printed within the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which have been furnished to booksellers for sale, during the last seven years, it appears that there were sold, in

	Bibles.	Testam.	Com.Pr.
1810,	42,288	63,984	47,889
1811,	37,292	62,045	41,951
1812,	50,611	79,408	74,622
1813,	67,585	50,344	67,809
1814,	60,816	62,167	69,445
1815,	66,388	64,229	88,233
1816,	65,183	81,109	94,004

PRAYER BOOK AND HOMILY SOCIETY.

On Thursday, the 8th of May, this Society's Fifth Anniversary Sermon was preached, at Christ Church, Newgate-street, by the Rev. R. P. Beachcroft, Rector of Blunham, Bedfordshire. The Annual General Meeting was afterwards held at the Albion Tavern, Aldersgate-street; the Right Hon. Lord Gambier in the chair. The Report stated, that select portions of the Liturgy translated into the Bullom language, by the Rev. G. R. Nyländer, had been printed at the Society's expense; that the Compendium of the Book of Common Prayer, translated into Hindoostanee, by the Rev. D. Corrie, was in the press; that an octavo edition of the Book of Homilies, with copious Indexes, had just been completed; that during the past year 8,891 Prayer-books, 1062 Psalters, more than 38,000 Homily Tracts, and 1071 copies of the

Articles of the Church of England in the same form, had been issued from the Society's Depository; that Prayer-books had been sold at two-thirds of the cost-price among the soldiery both at home and abroad; 1500 Homily Tracts had been distributed among the poor in Spitalfields, besides other donations both of Prayer-books and Tracts, for the use of scholars in Sunday Schools, and convicts on their voyage to New South Wales. An anonymous donation of 600*l.* was acknowledged; and many valuable names had been added to the list of subscribers.

In the course of the proceedings of the day, Mr. Thady Conely from Ireland stated, with great simplicity and effect, the advantage he had derived, under the Divine blessing, from the Book of Common Prayer translated by Bishop Bedell into his native tongue. The Rev. Mr. Hans and the Rev. George Hamilton expressed their earnest hope, that, in its exertions for the benefit of other countries, the Society would not forget the interests of Ireland. In this sentiment we cordially concur, and we trust that it will become an early object of the Society's attention to furnish the Irish with an edition of the Liturgy in their own language and character.

The Rev. Mr. Richmond, the Rev. Mr. Beachcroft, the Rev. Mr. Cunningham, the Rev. Mr. Wilson, the Rev. Mr. Burn, Mr. Babington, and several other gentlemen took a part in the proceedings of the day, and strongly enforced the claims of the Society to the cordial support of the members of the Church of England. Some highly

interesting facts were detailed, to shew the benefits arising from its institution, and from the increased attention which it had excited among the lower classes, to the Homilies, Articles, and Liturgy of the Church, and to the venerated examples of those illustrious martyrs and confessors who had framed them. It was noticed as one, and that not the least, beneficial result of the formation of this Society, that the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge had been induced first to place the entire Book of Homilies in its catalogue, and subsequently to adopt the plan of circulating the separate Homilies as tracts. Considering the wide extent to which their diffusion will thus be secured, had no other effect than this followed the institution of the Prayer-book and Homily Society, we should have said that it had answered a most important purpose. Our views, however, are now carried far beyond the circle of our own islands, and are extended to the very ends of the earth. Measures have already been taken for putting our Liturgy into the hands of the Christian converts in Africa and Hindoostan; and we cannot but indulge the delightful hope that wherever the zeal of the Missionary Societies belonging to the Church of England shall carry the knowledge of a crucified Saviour, there the faith of the converts will be directed by the scriptural instructions of our Articles and Homilies, and their devotion cherished and animated by the divine strains of our liturgical services.

It was well remarked by Mr. Cunningham, that in the recent efforts which have been made to disturb the public peace, by exciting the people to tumult and insurrection, the barriers to their designs which our domestic enemies found it most important to remove were the formularies of the Church of England. Sedition despaired of her cause while these remained. To bring these into contempt by blasphemous parodies, and thus to alienate the minds of the people from the lessons and prayers of their ancestors, formed a main hope of the disaffected. But this very circumstance, as the same gentleman justly observed, ought to give fresh vigour to our exertions in favour of the Society. We ought to meet the exigency by increased activity, and resist the enemy with the very weapons of which he has shewn himself to be most afraid.

CHURCH-OF-ENGLAND TRACT SOCIETY.

The Fifth Annual Meeting of this useful Institution was held in Bristol on the 30th December, 1816: the Hon. and Right

Rev. the Bishop of Gloucester in the chair. At the preceding anniversary the funds of the Society had been declared very inadequate to its intended objects; but in consequence of an earnest appeal to public liberality, they had been considerably increased during the year, so that the Society had been enabled to prosecute its benvolent views to a greater extent than at the commencement of that period there appeared any reason to expect. The total receipts for 1816, including 200*l.* by sale of tracts, amounted to 65*l.* 16*s.*; the expenditure was 66*l.* 19*s.* 10*d.* The Bishops of Gloucester and St. David's had sanctioned the Society by their patronage: twenty-three tracts had been re-printed, and seven new ones added to the list; each edition, both of the new tracts and the reprints, consisting of ten thousand copies. The total number of Tracts printed in the course of the year was two hundred and seventy-five thousand.

The new tracts are as follows:—

No. XLIV. The History of the worthy Martyr of God, the Rev. John Nicolson, better known by the Name of John Lambert, who was burnt in Smithfield in the Year 1538.—12 pages.

No. XLV. A Short History of the State of the Church in England, from the first Introduction of Christianity, to the Establishment of the blessed Reformation, under Queen Elizabeth.—36 pages.

No. XLVI. A Clergyman's Address to his Parishioners.—4 pages.

No. XLVII. A Clergyman's Second Address to his Parishioners.—4 pages.

No. XLVIII. An Address to those who wish to attend upon the Worship of Almighty God with devout Reverence, and to their spiritual Advantage.—4 pages.

No. XLIX. The Life of the Rev. William Tyndall, the translator of the Bible, called the Apostle of England, at the Time of the Reformation, who was burnt at Antwerp in the Year 1536.—12 pages.

L. The Parochial Minister's Affectionate Address to a newly-married Couple.—12 pages.

These, together with the preceding Numbers, as far back as No. 30, will make a second volume, which the Com-

mittee had ordered to be prepared without delay.

Tracts issued during the year were, by sale, ninety-eight thousand three hundred and ninety-seven; sent with the Report to subscribers, one thousand seven hundred and two; donations, six thousand; amounting in the whole to one hundred and six thousand and ninety-nine. The proceeds of tracts sold amount to 200*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*

The receipts of the year had not, however, been adequate to the expenditure. Indeed, it was not to be expected that the returns of one year should so far exceed those of others as to meet not only its own exigences, but the deficiencies of former years; and when it is recollected that the money is not lost, but reduced to another form, convertible into its original shape, the Society will appear to have resources in itself fully and even more than equal to all the claims that lie upon it. The stock of tracts on hand at the depository, and with the several agents of the Society, amounted to four hundred and seventeen thousand two hundred and thirty-two; the net value of which is more than 900*l.*, a sum so far exceeding the claims upon the Society, as to leave property to the amount of at least 400*l.*"

It must not, however, be imagined, from this statement, that the Society, though fully capable of redeeming its debt, stands therefore in need of little or no further assistance. One great aim of the Committee has been to establish a respectable capital, which alone can enable them to effect the objects of the institution, especially the retaining a competent number of tracts in various local depositories in different parts of the kingdom. Materially to lessen their present stock, without providing a corresponding supply, would greatly cripple the powers of the institution; the Committee therefore look with increasing hopes and expectations to the friends of their society, to assist still further its important operations.

Ireland and Wales offer a wide field for Christian exertion. Of the latter the Bishop of St. David's writes: "I am very glad that the connection of our Church Union Society with the Bristol Church-of-England Tract Society is acceptable to your Committee. I have no doubt that it will be very beneficial to us, especially if

you adopt Mr. Cotton's proposal. Welsh tracts are essentially necessary to us, and I am persuaded that if you print Welsh translations of your tracts, there will be a large demand for them in both parts of the principality."—The venerable the Archdeacon of Cardigan confirms this testimony. "We promise ourselves," he remarks, "great advantage from our connection with your Society, and I flatter myself that the poor natives of this country will derive very substantial and permanent benefit from it."

In consequence of an order from the Rev. Thomas Twisleton, at Columbo, 19,400 tracts, of the value of 50*l.* had been remitted to that place. From Boston, in America, Mr. Merrill announces the formation of "The Episcopal Prayer-book and Tract Society of the Eastern Diocese," of which he is appointed Secretary; adding, "Success, far beyond our expectations, has hitherto attended us. Already several Auxiliary Societies have been instituted in the interior of the state. We should be grateful for any advice, which may aid us in regulating our Society, and for such of the Bristol tracts as you may think suitable for re-publication in this country. We have witnessed with delight the unprecedented exertions of the Church of England in the cause of Christianity, and shall endeavour, by our humble efforts, to imitate the bright example you have set us."

Several new corresponding members and agents have been obtained: a wide sphere for the circulation of the tracts was opening in the towns and neighbourhood of Nottingham, Sheffield, and Leeds, in addition to the places mentioned in former Reports. In the first-named of these places, the Committee expect the formation of a Branch Society; and in Sheffield there already existed a society, called "The Sheffield Church-of-England Tract Society," which was largely supplied with tracts. Peculiar obligations had been laid upon the Society, by the zealous services of its friends in Leicester and the neighbourhood. Some arrangements also had been made in the metropolis, calculated more effectually to promote the interests of the Society in that important sphere of action, by affording greater accommodation to its friends who live in London, or places with which London has peculiar facilities for intercourse; as also by making the institution more generally known. Instead of many agents, the business of the Society

will thus, in future, be conducted by one. Mr. Seeley has undertaken the management of this important branch of the institution; and has been authorized to supply subscribers with tracts at the reduced prices, and to receive subscriptions and donations for the Society.

The Society conclude their Report as follows:—"When your Committee view the beauty of their venerable parent, the Church of England, they cannot but feel the liveliest emotions of affection and respect—they cannot but wish that all loved her as they themselves do—they cannot suppress the feeling that every one, whether a member of her communion or not, every one who loves 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' is deeply interested in her prosperity: they cannot but warmly advocate this institution, whose object is to unfold and to commend her excellences; and whether they look to the interests of those whose views and feelings harmonize with their own, or of those who, differing from them on this point, are the friends of pure and undefiled religion, this is their determination, and they trust it will be that of a daily increasing number, with respect both to the Church herself, and to this institution, her handmaid: 'For our brethren and companions' sakes, we will wish thee prosperity; yea, because of the house of the Lord our God we will seek to do thee good.'"

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

The anniversary of this Society was held at the Freemasons' Tavern on the 7th of May; Lord Teignmouth in the chair. His lordship commenced the business by reading the Report of the Committee for the last year, which particularized the contributions of the Auxiliary Societies to a large amount, and noticed the astonishing number of Bibles which had been circulated by the Society. Apologies for unavoidable absence were read from the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord Exmouth; and a motion for thanks was passed to the Vice-Presidents of the Society, to the Dukes of York, Kent, Cumberland, Sussex, and Gloucester. W. Money, Esq. M. P. introduced a cheering description of the extension of religion in India and the island of Ceylon. The Rev. Dr. Mason, Secretary to the American National Bible Society, gave a lively account of the progress of reli-

gion in that country. Dr. Thorpe, as Secretary to the Hibernian Bible Society, mentioned many interesting circumstances relative to Ireland, where, he said, 35,000 Bibles had been distributed in the course of the last year. He mentioned an instance of an old man of ninety-seven making a pilgrimage of fifty miles to beg a Testament of large print, who assured him, that, till the year before, he had never heard of such a book. He stated that 300,000 Bibles were still wanting to enable every family in Ireland to possess a copy. Several other gentlemen spoke; and we hope to have an early opportunity of giving an outline, both of the speeches and of the Report. It was gratifying to us to find that the funds of the Society, notwithstanding the extraordinary pressure of the times, have experienced very little diminution. The sum total of contributions, during the year, was only about 700*l.* less than those of the preceding year.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CANADA.

An urgent appeal has been lately made in behalf of our fellow-subjects, the inhabitants of the Eastern Townships in Lower Canada, for assistance from England in erecting churches in connection with the Established Church at home. The population is entirely Protestant, and amounts to the number of twenty thousand souls, extending over a territory of three thousand square miles. Except in the seigniories of St. Armand and Caldwell Manor, the whole of this country is totally destitute of churches. Throughout the district, the people feel sensibly the want of places of public worship; and at several meetings lately held, they have resolved to build churches as soon as their means are more equal to so great an undertaking. But, without some aid from this country, it is feared that they are unable to accomplish this desirable but expensive object. At the same time it must be observed, that in Canada a much smaller sum will be sufficient for the purpose than would be requisite here; since the materials and other expenses of building are cheap proportionally with the poverty of the people. When it is considered that twenty-five years ago the greater part of this country was an uninhabited wilderness; that all the settlers were either labourers or poor farmers; that it was necessary to build

houses for themselves, and barns for their stock and grain; that roads were to be made, and schools erected; and all this without the least assistance from any public fund; it cannot be a matter of surprise that there are scarcely any churches, and that an appeal should be made to the generosity of the mother country.

At present, there are only three ministers of the Established Church in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada. Their salaries (200*l.* sterling per annum) are paid partly by his Majesty's Government, and partly by the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; and an extension of similar support has been promised to any township in which the inhabitants shall erect a church and a parsonage. These conditions are, on various accounts, wise and salutary; but it is manifest, that unless the people are enabled, by pecuniary assistance, to meet these terms, they cannot derive essential advantage from this liberal offer. It will be satisfactory, however, to those who are disposed to assist them, to be informed, that, notwithstanding their slender means, they are ready to use every exertion on their part, and to make such sacrifices as shall render them worthy of public benevolence. To this may be added the gratifying intelligence, that well-educated clergymen may be procured in England who will go to Canada, and that there are now several young men prosecuting their studies in that country with a view to admission into holy orders.

Among the donors, we perceive both the archbishops, with a considerable number of the bishops, his Majesty's ministers, several colleges at Oxford, and a highly respectable list of the nobility, gentry, church dignitaries, and private clergy.

Subscriptions will be received by Marsh

and Co., Drummond and Co., Herries and Co., Hoare and Co., and Martin and Co., bankers, London; the Hon and Rev. Dr. Stewart, 57, Davies-street, Berkeley-square; R. Atcheson, Esq 35, Great Winchester-street; Messrs. Rivington, St. Paul's Church-yard; and Mr Hatchard, Piccadilly;—also by Fletcher and Co., Oxford; Mortlock and Sons, Cambridge; Hobhouse and Co., Bath; the Rev. M. Jackson, Leeds; Forbes and Co., Edinburgh; and the Rev. W. Routledge, Glasgow.

The Lord Bishop of Quebec having represented that the circumstances of the inhabitants of the province of Upper Canada, and of some other parts of the diocese of Quebec, are similar to those of the inhabitants of the Eastern Townships in the Lower Province, and that they are equally with them deserving of assistance from the benevolence of this country; it is proposed to extend the plan of the above subscription, and to make it general in affording aid in the erection of churches, according to the Establishment of the Church of England, to the inhabitants of both the Canadas. The population of Upper Canada, consisting almost entirely of Protestants, exceeds one hundred thousand souls. The appeal in behalf of the interests of the Church, and of the inhabitants of the Eastern Townships, having been so favourably received, and supported by liberal contributions of numerous benefactors, it is hoped that their example will be followed by many pious and charitable persons; and that similar aid and encouragement towards the erection of churches will be afforded to the rest of the inhabitants of both the provinces.

The Lord Bishop of Quebec, the Hon. and Rev. Dr. Stewart, of St. Armand, in Lower Canada, and the Rev. Dr. Strachan, of York, in Upper Canada, are answerable for the proper disposal of the money subscribed.

VIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

In France seditious proceedings continue to be occasionally discovered, and arrests are in consequence taking place. The details, however, are of very little interest, except as they bear upon the general

Christ. Observ. No. 185.

fact of the still unsettled condition of that unhappy country.—A late *census* states Paris to contain 715,595 persons, divided into 227,252 families, and occupying 27,371 houses.

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From Italy, Switzerland, and some other countries, the most distressing intelligence continues to arrive of the prevalence of typhus fever and similar affections, from insufficient nourishment and the bad quality of the food. In addition to the various accounts which have appeared in the public journals; we have seen private letters which but too fully corroborate the fact. The following is an extract from one dated Lausanne, April 30; and should it meet the eye of any traveller in that neighbourhood, we trust it will not plead in vain.

"Never was known in the annals of Switzerland such a period of sufferings. The horrors of famine are not, thank God! felt in the Canton de Vaud, Geneva, nor indeed any of the Protestant Cantons; but among the Catholics it beggars all description. I had last week a memorial sent me from the Canton of Glâris, which nearly equals in horror the siege of Jerusalem: it has been forwarded to England to the resident Swiss, and I hope they will collect something considerable. Madame ——— really suffers in mind and body, from the contemplation of sufferings so great and so extensive. Their country house is in a small village in Savoy, where but for them the inhabitants would be starved to death. The heavy losses which their own fortune has sustained cripples their means; and this winter Madame ——— has deprived her children of all their masters, to feed the poor wretched Catholics, who are as helpless and as ignorant as possible. This truly excellent woman goes twice a week herself to *make* and to distribute bread, which is baked in their own oven; but she says it will be impossible for them to go and reside there this summer, as she cannot see her neighbours starve, nor yet supply the *hundreds* who besiege her gate, and cry to her as their only friend. Her spirits are quite weighed down, and sometimes she weeps and prays in real agony."

In consequence of the occupation of Monte Video by the Portuguese, some serious misunderstandings have occurred between Spain and Portugal, which, it is apprehended, may lead to hostilities. If, however, a recent report which has reached this country, of a general insurrection of the Brazilians against their government, should be confirmed, the dispute between the two states will be settled without much difficulty.

On Easter Sunday there was published at St. Petersburg, a very remarkable imperial mandate, in favour of such Jews as are, or may be, converted to the Christian faith. In the northern and southern governments, lands are to be assigned them *gratis*, where such as please may settle at their own expense, under the name of the *Society of Jewish Christians*. A Board also is to be formed at St. Petersburg, entitled "The Board for the Affairs of Jewish Christians;" on which, and on no other magistrates, except in criminal cases, the converted Jews are to depend. They are to be allowed to carry on trade and commerce, to establish manufactories, distilleries, &c. They are to be free from military service and the billeting of troops. Foreign converted Jews, who may join this community, will be at liberty again to leave the country after paying their debts, and the legal contributions for three years upon the capital which they may have acquired therein.

The last advices from China, by the ship General Hewitt, have, in some measure, dissipated the clouds which appeared to be gathering in that quarter. Lord Amherst and his suite arrived at Canton on New-Year's Day, after a journey of four months through the heart of the country. The *alleged* cause of the dismissal of the embassy, without an audience, appears to have been a misrepresentation made by the minister Ho-kung-ye, for which he was a few days after dismissed from all his offices; but this was probably a mere pretence. No reliance can be placed on the official statements of the Chinese government as developing either the facts of the case or the motives of their own conduct.—It may be mentioned as a remarkable proof of their profligate disregard of truth, even in public acts, that in an imperial rescript issued on the occasion, the destructive attack of the British frigate, *Alceste*, on the Chinese forts, was represented merely as a salute, in firing which, some trivial accidents had occurred, in consequence of the shot, from inadvertence, not having been drawn from a few of the guns.—All we certainly know is, that the embassy has not been received. The Chinese would not relax from their demand of certain prostrations, which were found to be more humiliating than his lordship had anticipated, and with which he refused to comply. They were required, doubtless, with a view

to this result. No bad consequences, however, had followed; and with the exception of being received at Court, every courtesy and respect have been paid to the embassy. The presents had all been returned, except the portraits of his majesty and the prince regent, which were retained as a mark of respect to them.

Considerable discussion has occurred during the last month, both in and out of Parliament, on some important questions, connected with holding seditious meetings and vending illegal pamphlets. On the 27th March, Lord Sidmouth had issued a circular letter to the Lords Lieutenants of Counties, notifying the opinion of the Crown Law Officers, that individuals found selling seditious or blasphemous writings might be arrested and held to bail to answer to the charge. Various persons have in consequence been taken up; and the evil appears, from authority, to be considerably abated.

In the execution, however, of these and other discretionary powers vested in the magistrate, a few instances of misconception have occurred. In particular, a very respectable society in London, composed exclusively of members of the Universities and Inns of Court, was refused a license to meet, as they had done for more than nineteen years, to discuss "philosophical, literary, historical, and political subjects." One of the magistrates expressly stated his opinion, that "the purpose of the late act was to put down all political discussion whatever;" the very absurdity of which statement has led the way to such explanations as will probably prevent similar abuses in future. It need hardly be added, that the society has since obtained the desired license.

Among other persons supposed to have been affected by the above-mentioned circular, is a Mr. Wright, a Socinian minister of Liverpool, who has been publicly mentioned as having been molested expressly for preaching what are denominated Unitarian doctrines. But the Bishop of Chester informed the House of Lords that it was not for teaching Unitarianism, properly so called, that Mr. Wright was held to bail, but for having been charged, upon oath, with "denying the immortality of the soul," and maintaining that "the idea of a future state was an absurdity." It was not, however, for this, but for preaching in an *unlicensed room*, that Mr. Wright was fined; and the fine imposed upon him, which was but twenty shillings, has been since con-

firmed at the Sessions to which he appeared.

Thistlewood, who is supposed to have been a chief agent in the seditious movements which took place before the meeting of Parliament, and to have supplied the conspirators with money, has been apprehended, and arraigned with Watson, sen., Hooper, and Preston, for the crime of high treason. The trials will commence on the 9th June. A true bill was also found against Watson, jun. whose place of concealment is still unknown.

We are grieved to learn that ministers deem it necessary, for the public safety, to recommend to parliament a continuation of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, and the other restrictions at present in force. The propriety or impropriety of the measure cannot, of course, be known, till the secret committees which are to be nominated shall have sat and reported on the subject.

The Catholic question has once more undergone an ample discussion in both houses of parliament. Sir H. Parnell presented, on the 29th April, a petition from the Roman Catholics of Ireland; in which the petitioners, with a view to remove the objections formerly made, pledged themselves to procure from the pope a *concordat*, agreeing that none but native-born subjects should be raised to the prelacy, and that the election should be exclusively in the hands of the native clergy. Mr. Grattan rose, on the 9th May, to move a resolution similar to that which was carried in 1813, for the appointment of a committee of the whole house to consider the subject. The debate lasted till three o'clock the next morning, when upon a division there appeared

For the motion,	221
Against it,	245

It was consequently lost by a majority of 24.

In the house of lords a similar motion was made on the 16th May, and lost by a majority of 52; 99 being for the motion, and 142 against it.

Another inefficient attempt has been made in parliament to suppress state lotteries. The evil cannot, however, in all probability, long exist, as public opinion is decidedly against it, and the revenue derived from it becomes more and more precarious.

The chancellor of the exchequer, ap-

According to the intimation given in our last Number, has proposed to issue on security, a million and a half of exchequer bills in Great Britain, and a quarter of a million of money in Ireland, for the relief of the manufacturing poor, and with a view to employ them on works of public utility, and especially to encourage our native fisheries. The money is to be managed by gratuitous commissioners, and is to be issued to individual parishes, on their giving adequate securities. We sincerely hope the measure may be found as efficient in its execution, as it is doubtless humane in its design.

Sir F. Burdett has again brought forward a motion with a view to reform in parliament, which, after a long debate, was negatived by a very large majority.

Mr. Manners Sutton has brought in a bill designed to amend and consolidate the different acts relative to clerical residence, and the holding of farms by clergymen, as well as to regulate the support and maintenance of stipendiary curates. The bill is at present only in its progress through the House of Commons, where it may possibly

undergo some alterations. It would therefore be premature to speak of it in very decided terms. At the same time, unless the alterations shall prove considerable, we have no hope that it will be found materially to diminish the evil of non-residence, which the former bill of Sir William Scott, brought in likewise as a remedial measure, has certainly not tended to lessen. The number of non-residents has increased, since the passing of that act, in the proportion of about one half more. The clause in the bill, however, to which we feel the most serious objection, is one which *virtually* invests the bishop with the power of appointing all the stipendiary curates in his diocese. As this clause has met with considerable opposition, we are not without hope that it may be materially modified. In its present form it would operate a fearful change on the constitution of the Church of England. Such of our readers as wish to see the principles involved in this legislative measure more fully discussed, may turn to our volumes for 1802, pp. 513—519; and for 1803, pp. 212, 236, 299: and for information as to the effects of Sir W. Scott's bill, we would refer them to our volumes for 1808, p. 468, and for 1812, p. 398.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"A CONSTANT READER" will perceive that the subject of his paper has been anticipated.

P. M.; E.; T. J. O.; A. E.; A COUNTRY CURATE; GAIUS; R. W.; have been received. PENSATOR; S.; CERETICUS; E. on Irish Female Education, will be inserted.

WM. M. had better give us the information he proposes, by letter.

The "ESSAY ON THE POETRY OF COWPER" is left at our Publisher's for the Author.

Another "CONSTANT READER" is not very reasonable in his anger. A correspondent of ours has preferred a charge against the Bible edited by Dr. Mant. Whether that charge be just, or not, is a question in which we have taken no part. But even if we had ascertained it to be well founded, we should not think it our duty to shut the Blue Cover against Dr. Mant.

Several articles of Religious Intelligence have reached us at too late a period of the month to be admitted.

We are requested to state, that donations for the relief of the distressed poor of the extensive parish of Darlaston, near Birmingham, will be thankfully received by the Rev. S. Lowe, Rector of Darlaston; Messrs. Spooner and Co., Gracechurch-street; the Rev. W. Marsh, of Colchester; Mr. Mortlock, Oxford Road; and Mr. Hatchard, 190, Piccadilly. Owing to the decay of the iron trade, the pressure in that parish has been unusually severe, and the funds which have hitherto supplied soup, bread, &c. are on the point of exhaustion. It is confidently hoped that if public liberality shall continue to assist the poor of that neighbourhood for a few months longer, the revival of the iron trade will furnish employment and effectual relief to the wants of the industrious inhabitants.